



Western Upper Peninsula Citizen Advisory Council DNR Division Reports

Date of Production: March 2025 (Information current as of 3/11/2025)

This document is provided by Michigan DNR staff as a supplement for Western UPCAC Council members. Please email or call with any questions.

Meetings/Events/Press Releases

Upcoming DNR Public Meetings

For virtual or conference call meeting information, please go to the DNR website at: [DNR Meetings](#) and click on the appropriate meeting and/or agenda for instructions.

March 18	Western Upper Peninsula Citizens Advisory Council, Baraga, 6pm (906-226-1331)
March 21	Equine Trails Subcommittee, 1pm (517-331-6219)
March 21	Timber and Forest Products Advisory Council, 10am (517-582-3204)
March 25	Trails Advisory Council, 1pm (517-331-6219)
March 31	Board of Foresters, 3pm (989-370-9557)
April 10	Natural Resources Commission, 9am (nrc@michigan.gov)
April 15	Eastern UP Citizens Advisory Council, Newberry, 6pm (906-225-1331)

UP State Park & State Sponsored Activities

Please check with the state park before attending activity for any scheduling changes. For all activities: [DNR Things to Do Calendar](#)

Once late spring/summer arrives, check out these links for weekly nature events held at UP state parks:

- [Van Riper State Park Explorer Guide Program Schedule](#)
- [McLain State Park Explorer Guide Schedule](#)
- [Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park Explorer Guide Schedule](#)
- [Wells State Park Explorer Guide Schedule](#)
- [DNR Pocket Park-Escanaba Program Schedule](#)
- [Indian Lake State Park Explorer Guide Schedule](#)
- [Tahquamenon Falls State Park Explorer Guide Schedule](#)

Recent DNR Press Releases

For full details, go to: [DNR Press Room](#)

- Natural Resources Commission to meet Thursday in Grand Rapids (3/7/25)
- Showcasing the DNR: Wandering wondering (3/6/25)
- Campground pay pipe thief headed to circuit court in Luce County (3/4/25)
- DNR News: Birding webinars, safety reminder, March fun and helping (3/3/25)
- Gear up for great fishing: 2025 Michigan fishing licenses now available (3/3/25)
- State awards \$3.6 million for invasive species prevention and control (3/3/25)
- Spring turkey drawing results, Hunt 0234, eHarvest tags (3/3/25)
- We want your take on trails (2/27/25)
- Parks, timber, trails and shipwrecks on agenda for March meetings (2/24/25)
- MDARD marks National Invasive Species Awareness Week with important reminders (2/21/25)
- Share your thoughts on walleye regulation for Luce, Mackinac counties (2/19/25)
- DNR News: Winter birds, trails planning, Run for the Trees and more (2/18/25)

Grant Contacts

For grant information, to go: [DNR Grants](#)

- | | |
|---|---|
| ▪ Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Grant | Merrie Carlock, 517-284-5931, carlockm@michigan.gov |
| ▪ Recreation Passport Grant | Merrie Carlock, 517-284-5931, carlockm@michigan.gov |
| ▪ Michigan Spark Grants (Public Recreation) | Merrie Carlock, 517-284-5931, carlockm@michigan.gov |
| ▪ Aquatic Habitat Grant | Chip Kosloski, 517-284-5965, kosloskic3@michigan.gov |
| ▪ Fisheries Habitat Grant Program | Chip Kosloski, 517-284-5965, kosloskic3@michigan.gov |
| ▪ Michigan Invasive Species Grant | Erin Campbell, 269-300-9698, campbelle6@michigan.gov |
| ▪ Wildlife Habitat Grant | Clay Buchanan, 517-614-0918, buchanenc1@michigan.gov |
| ▪ U.P. Deer Habitat Improvement Partnership Grant | Bill Scullon, 906-563-9247, scullonh@michigan.gov |
| ▪ Forestry Grants | https://www.michigan.gov/dnr/buy-and-apply/grants/forestry |
| ▪ Land & Water Conservation Fund | Christie Bayus, 517-242-8737, bayusc@michigan.gov |
| ▪ Waterways Program Grants | Linnea Dawson, 517-290-2200, dawsonl@michigan.gov |

Eastern UPCAC Update

The **Eastern UP Citizens' Advisory Council** met virtually on February 19. Items discussed include the annual election of officers for 2025 (Tom Buckingham-Chair, Gary Gorniak-Vice Chair, Steve Dey-Secretary), a wolf management update (recurring agenda topic), December meeting follow-up, an update on forest health issues, upcoming fisheries regulation proposals, an eastern UP snowmobile trail update and the status of the winter boating access site partnership for this year. There was no notable committee activity. **The next meeting of the group will be on April 15 in Newberry.**

More information on both the Western and Eastern CACs can be found at www.michigan.gov/upcac.

March NRC Meeting Recap – Ed Golder, Public Information Officer

The Natural Resources Commission met at the Michigan History Center in Lansing on February 13. This was the first meeting for new Commission Chair Dan Kildee of Flint Township. Chair Kildee's appointment was announced by the governor's office last month. Major actions at today's meeting:

Director Bowen approved one land transaction and four land use orders:

- **Land Use Order 1, the forest road inventory update:** The inventory is mandated by Act 288 of 2016, which requires the department to inventory roads annually to adjust our state forest road maps each year. The 2024 review resulted in the removal of 69 miles of road segments from state forest maps for conventional and ORV use. Data clean up resulted in 21.2 miles of roads removed, and another 15.3 miles added because they were not previously included in the inventory. With these changes, the department manages:
 - Upper Peninsula: 5,706.4 miles open to ORV use out of 5,800.6 total miles
 - Northern Lower Peninsula: 6,094.9 miles open to ORV use out of 7,286.7 total miles
 - Southern Lower Peninsula: 9.1 miles open to ORV use out of 359.1 total miles
- **Land Use Order 2** officially designates the Houghton Douglas Falls property as the Houghton Douglass Veterans Memorial Scenic Sight. The order also:
 - Includes a definition of "Scenic Site" on state lands.
 - Clarifies that unmanned aircraft regulations at state-operated boating access sites or harbors and state parks apply specifically to the launching of unmanned aircraft from state land.
 - Clarifies the definition of "Recreation Area" so that it is inclusive of all aspects of a recreation area and not inadvertently only inclusive of certain facility aspects.
 - Removes the definition of Personal Assistive Mobility Device as it applies to state lands as that definition is no longer in alignment with federal and state law.

- [Land Use Order 3](#) affects snowmobile use within state parks and recreation areas, addressing lands that are incompatible with snowmobiles for a variety of reasons. This order does not affect the use of snowmobiles on snowmobile trails or at a Boating Access Site to access ice.
- [Land Use Order 4](#) prohibits bicycles on a portion of the Cedar River North Trail and the Thunder Valley Equestrian Trail to address trail incompatibility issues.

Committee of the Whole

Fisheries Chief Randy Claramunt and Assistant Chief Ed Eisch [gave the Commission a report on funding needs for Michigan's fisheries](#). Randy made a clear case for the need for additional funding for the division, citing statistics about license costs in other states and the reduction in the buying power of license dollars due to inflation since 2014, the last time license costs were increased. He also pointed out the expansive fisheries portfolio managed by the department's relatively modest staff and budget compared to other states with less area to manage. Because of these inflationary pressures and budget limitations, the division has had to reduce services.

Wildlife Chief Sara Thompson and Assistant Chief Keith Kintigh [gave an overview of funding needs for management of wildlife in the state](#). Like the Fisheries Division, the Wildlife Division has not seen an increase in license costs since 2014, and has also faced inflationary pressures which have made it difficult to maintain programs and staff. Michigan deer licenses – a driving revenue source for the division -- are the least expensive in the Midwest, Sara told the Commission. Meanwhile, the cost of doing business has increased substantially, she said, including items such as increased costs for habitat projects, climbing administrative costs, and an increased need for managing human-wildlife conflicts.

A change in license costs will require legislative action. Director Bowen noted that the department attempted to work with lawmakers toward that goal in the most recent legislative session, but those efforts were unsuccessful. Our legislative efforts continue. The governor included a license increase in her Fiscal Year 2026 proposal, summarized in [a recent note from the director to DNR staff](#).

Sarah Cummins of the Wildlife Division told the commission about [our plans and schedule for the publication of regulations summaries](#). This followed delays in getting printed deer regulations summaries to customers for last year's seasons.

Chris Stark from the Parks and Recreation Division presented [a proposed amendment to the Wildlife Conservation Order for property in Cheboygan County known as Gete Mino Mshkiigan](#). Acquired in 2013, the property underwent a management planning process that was completed in 2023. The plan changed the property designation to a state park land with associated land use rules. The proposed revision to the Wildlife Conservation Order would allow for hunting to continue on this land under this new designation.

Cody Norton from the Wildlife Division [gave a presentation on bear population trends and season recommendations for 2025-2026](#). In the Upper Peninsula, our goal is to stabilize the bear population. In the Northern Lower Peninsula the goal is to maintain harvest levels to sustain a stable population. In the U.P., the desired harvest for the 2025-26 seasons is 1,244 bears, with a quota of 5,103 licenses. This is a 6% decrease from last year. In the Northern Lower, the department is recommending a desired harvest of 528 bears, with a quota of 1,420 licenses. This is a 4% increase over last year. The department is recommending a number of regulatory changes to the commission that are detailed in Cody's presentation.

A report on legislation affecting the department was provided to commissioners and is listed below.

How to Participate in the NRC Meetings

- If you're unable to attend the meeting but wish to submit written comments on agenda items, please write to: Natural Resources Commission, P.O. Box 30028, Lansing, MI 48909 or email: nrc@michigan.gov.
- If you would like further information or would like to address the Commission, please email: nrc@michigan.gov. Persons registering on or before the Friday preceding the meeting will be allowed up to five (5) minutes for their presentation. Persons registering after the Friday preceding the meeting or at the meeting will be allowed up to three (3) minutes. Persons with disabilities needing accommodations should contact the NRC Assistant.
- Look for the agendas and other Natural Resources Commission items at the Natural Resources Commission webpage (www.michigan.gov/NRC).

February Legislative Update – Chris Semrinec, Legislative Liaison

HB 4013 – Modifies the Responsibilities of Property Owners Under the Recreational Trespassing Law – Rep. Slagh: This bill amends the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act to require property owners to post signs at an interval of not more than 250 along the boundary of the property.

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

HB 4029 – Requires Postings of Rule and Regulation Change by a Certain Date – Rep. Slagh: This bill would amend the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act to require any regulation changes or orders issued for the taking of game by the Natural Resources Commission to be issued by August 15th. Orders issued after this will not be valid until the following year.

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

HB 4044 – Designates Official State Duck – Rep. Farhat: This bill designates the Wood duck as the official duck of the state of Michigan.

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

SB 63 – Modifies Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Grant Recipients – Sen. Hoitenga: This bill would amend the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act to modify the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund grant recipients to include state departments, counties, and road commissions.

- This bill has been referred to the Senate Appropriations Committee.
- The Administration has not yet taken a position on this bill.

SB 65 – Creates Deer Baiting License – Sen. Hoitenga: This bill would amend the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act to create a deer baiting license for private property, except in management units where wildlife diseases affecting deer or elk have been found.

- This bill has been referred to the Senate Natural Resources and Agriculture Committee.
- The Administration has not yet taken a position on this bill.

SB 67 – Requires Postings of Rule and Regulation Change by a Certain Date – Sen. Hoitenga: This bill would amend the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act to require any regulation changes or orders issued for the taking of game by the Natural Resources Commission to be issued by August 1st. Orders issued after this will not be valid until the following year.

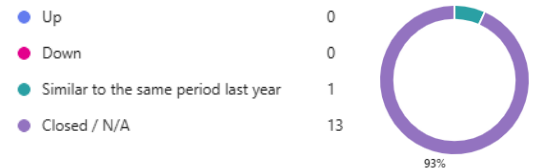
- This bill was referred to the Senate Committee on Energy and Environment.
- The Administration has not taken a position on this legislation.

Division Updates

Parks & Recreation Division: Doug Rich, WUP District Supervisor

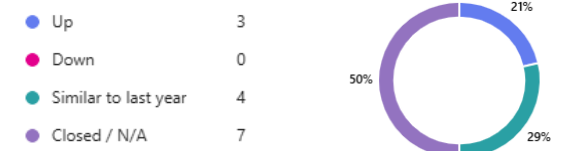
Camping

Bewabic State Park	We are gearing up for construction this spring of a new ARPA toilet shower building along with paving.
Twin Lakes State Park	Twin Lakes will close for the 2025 camping season due to ARPA toilet building construction along with paving.
Baraga State Park	Staff has plowed, opened the road and campsites at Big Eric's Bridge SFCG in preparation for the spring fishing season. Customer contacts for the upcoming camping season for Baraga SP are increasing and staff is preparing for the May 1 opening. The entrance signs for Baraga SP were taken down, cleaned, repaired and repainted.



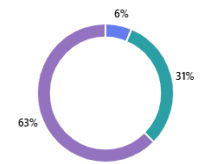
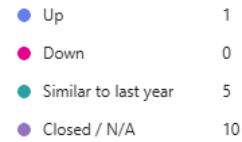
Overnight Lodging

Fort Wilkins Historic State Park	Mini cabin is closed for construction on the nearby toilet shower building.
Baraga State Park	Staff continues to work with the division office on the proposed alternate lodging contract for vendor built and maintained cabins.
Lake Gogebic Field Construction Crew	The Lake Gogebic Crew replaced flooring and created shelving and counters for 3 cabins at Wells State Park.



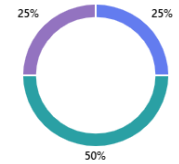
Boating Access Sites and Harbors

Baraga Field Office	Worked on skid pier refurbishment. Built two brand new skid piers for Cedar River Harbor.
Baraga State Park	Use is similar at the BAS sites that are popular for ice fishing, like Vermillac Lake.
Escanaba Field Office	Winter use of local boating access sites has been up this winter season- ice conditions have allowed vehicle traffic on the bay, while previous seasons have not had adequate coverage.



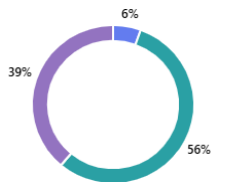
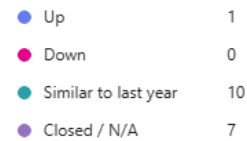
Trails

Bewabic State Park	In process of completing second round of snowmobile trail inspections.
Fort Wilkins Historic State Park	Ski trail conditions have been really good this year.
Lake Gogebic State Park	Snowmobile trails have been very busy with good conditions.
Baraga State Park	With higher snowfall, snowmobile trail and parking area use has been much higher and with the trail being relocated behind the campground, there has been very little off trail riding through the campground.
Escanaba Field Office	While we have received slightly more snow in the south central UP compared to last season, snowmobile trail conditions have been mostly poor, and usage has been similar to last season. Cross country ski pathway usage has been similar to snowmobile usage. Anderson Lake has had adequate snow to groom and maintain a classic track, while Days River has had very low snow.
Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park	Snowmobile trail use may be the highest we've ever experienced.
Twin Lakes State Park	Snowmobile trails have been extremely busy this year around Twin Lakes area.



Day Use

McLain State Park	McLain is getting a new playground this summer for the Day Use area as part of the Michigan National Guard IRT.
Bond Falls Scenic Site	With colder temps and higher snowfall, there were more visitors to the site for winter ice photos and more snowmobiles could access the county road to walk down to the falls as well. Entrance signs were taken down, cleaned, repaired and repainted. We have several event permit wedding requests in progress.



Design, Construction, Capital Outlay and ARPA Projects

Lake Gogebic State Park	Meetings continue for the campground utilities improvement ARPA project. Construction is scheduled to begin mid-August 2025.
McLain State Park	McLain has been finishing up construction on the Sewage lagoon and it will be completed this spring. The campground will be open on time this spring.
Little Presque Isle State Forest RA	Most work has been completed on the existing trails, new bridge, and Harlow Lake Fishing Pier at Little Presque Isle State Forest within the Van Riper Unit. The railings still need to be completed on the fishing pier however, the quality of work on all areas by the contractor is excellent. We look forward to the rest of the project being wrapped up as weather permits or in the spring.
Fort Wilkins Historic State Park	West Campground toilet shower building nearing completion (June 2025) planning for electrical upgrade in the East Campground are on schedule. Construction to begin Aug 2025.
Bewabic State Park	Pre-construction meetings are occurring in preparation for breaking ground on a new toilet shower building in May.
Van Riper State Park	Projects within the Van Riper State Park Unit are continuing to move forward or have been completed. All furnace replacements and roofing repairs have been completed at the Michigan Iron Industry Museum. The wastewater study for the wastewater system at Van Riper State Park is being awarded and this will move forward in the spring when the snow melts. Planning and purchasing is underway for the coming 2025 Innovative Readiness Training in partnership with the Michigan Army National Guard, set to take place the first two weeks of June.
Twin Lakes State Park	Twin Lakes continues to move forward with the ARPA construction project that includes a new bathroom building and paving of the campground
Craig Lake State Park	Planning and ordering of materials has continued for coming updates to the Small Cabin within Craig Lake State Park in partnership with the Michigan Army National Guard scheduled for Spring 2025.
Baraga State Park	Staff is working on upcoming partnerships with the MIARNG, like re-roofing the park HQ.
Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park	Visitor's Center ARPA project is in full swing.
Menominee River State RA	Meetings continue on the ADA access improvement project at the Piers Gorge Unit. Project includes, parking lot expansion, a new bridge, boardwalk, aggregate surface trail and viewing platform.

Special Events, Volunteer Projects, Accomplishments, Challenges or Personnel News

Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park	700-800 skiers each Saturday this season so far. The 35th Annual Midwest Tele-fest was a success, and the Snowburst Winter Carnival was held on 2/22/25!
Bewabic State Park	Bewabic State Park is having difficulties filling the vacant lead ranger position. Position has posted six times in twelve months. Bewabic State Park accounting assistant position is also vacant.
Wells State Park	Casey Delfosse is attending the ranger academy at the RAM center.
Van Riper State Park	Van Riper State Park hosted 3 lantern lit snowshoe events this winter. Two were hosted at Van Riper State Park in the Peshekee River Rustic Campground on a 1.25-mile loop around the River Trail and the Old Wagon Road. Each event hosted around 75 visitors. A third event was hosted at the Michigan Iron Industry Museum as saw around 80-85 visitors. This was a great way to give exposure and awareness to visitors about the museum and what it has to offer. Museum staff did a great job helping visitors inside the museum and Van Riper staff met visitors and oriented them to the snowshoe trail portion of the event. Overall, this was a great event that will return to the Michigan Iron Industry Museum again next winter. Van Riper State Park was lucky enough to host the 2024 Moose Capture activities and act as Base Camp for all Wildlife staff and contracted helicopter staff from Heliwild. Preparations began almost a week in advance of the helicopter landing and wildlife staff were welcomed and made themselves at home. The actual capture took 2 days, including a short delay for weather and was a success, capturing all 20 moose as the original goal. Van Riper Staff is hopeful to have the opportunity to host again next year.
Menominee River State RA	Seasonal ranger vacancy persists.

Facilities and Operations Division: Sean Sundholm, WUP Administrative Area Manager

- A new roofing project for the crystal falls field office has kicked off. UP architects and engineers (UPAE) was the best value bidder chosen for phase 100 study. We have had a 50% design meeting with the 90% design meeting scheduled for later in March. Once designed we will have a better idea of cost's.
- Staff are starting to see more customers for the start of the 2025 license season, with trail permits, ORV license, state park passport sales and fishing licenses.
- Marquette and Escanaba Customer Service Centers (CSCs) had a facility assessment done mid-September; they will identify energy efficiency areas in which the department could lower energy usage. Awaiting the recommendations from the contractor that performed the energy assessment.
- Along with daily operations, many of our Western Upper Peninsula (WUP) staff have been engaged on committees looking at future customer service needs.
- Area managers have been working on developing and completing multiple minor construction projects (LED lighting, Solar applications, general facility renovations, health, and safety improvements) throughout the state.
- Our Escanaba CSC has a contractor pre-bid walkthrough scheduled for April 15 for a solar panel project.

Wildlife Division: Dave Lemmien, UP Wildlife Supervisor

- **Staffing Update:** New Baraga Wildlife Biologist: Ms. Morgan Lucot has accepted the Baraga Biologist position. Morgan attended Michigan State University where she earned a BS in Zoology graduating in 2016. Before coming to MI, she was employed by the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management as the Bear and Furbearer Specialist since 2022. Prior to that she was employed by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission as the Central Area Bear Biologist.

In Rhode Island, she was responsible for the administration of the statewide bear and furbearer management program. She led the Rhode Island Conflict Management Program, focusing on addressing wildlife issues that arise between humans and local species. This involved developing strategies to mitigate conflicts, such as creating educational materials and outreach initiatives to inform the public about coexistence with wildlife. In her specialist capacity she also led the development of research collaborations with universities focused on bobcats, muskrats, and other species. While in RI she also gained valuable habitat management and planning experience working on land management and becoming part of their prescribed burn team. In

RI she also headed up numerous public engagement campaigns, podcasts, and official media / digital outreach focused of bears, furbearers, and outdoor recreation.

Morgan is an active hunter, trapper, and outdoors woman. She is a Michigander from Ann Arbor with lifelong family ties to recreating in northern Marquette County. She will be starting in Baraga March 17th.

- **Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI):** HPAI cases are now confirmed in domestic birds, wild birds, and wild mammals throughout most of North America. Since late February 2022, Michigan has experienced die-offs in wild birds and mammals across the state due to HPAI. Monitoring of sick and dead wildlife for HPAI continues and the disease is considered widespread and endemic across Michigan and North America. The Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development continues to take swift action in response to this disease and is closely monitoring and responding to reports of sick domestic birds and HPAI throughout the state. HPAI has caused extensive illness and death in a range of wild bird species across North America. In particular, waterfowl, raptors, scavengers, gulls and terns have been affected. The DNR is focusing its surveillance efforts by prioritizing testing dead birds from die-offs of six or more birds, as well as bald eagles, and abnormal acting hawks, owls, and wild mammals.

Please visit the HPAI section within the MIDNR website including the Frequently Asked Questions portion. <https://www.michigan.gov/dnr/managing-resources/wildlife/wildlife-disease/disease-monitoring/avian-influenza-updates>.

- **Moose Capture Project Update:** Phase 1 of the moose capture project has been completed. The goal was to collar 20 moose targeting 5 bulls, 10 cows, and 5 calves. This goal was completed within less than 2 days. While collaring the moose, Wildlife Division Staff collected biological and genetic samples from each animal. Staff will begin analyzing the samples as well as begin tracking animal movement. Staff will investigate all mortality signals moving forward. After calving season, staff will locate each of the collared cows to determine reproductive status with a keen interest on twinning rates.
- **2025 Deer Habitat Improvement Partnership Initiative (DHPI):** The Deer Habitat Improvement Partnership Initiative (DHPI) is a competitive grant program offered by Wildlife Division and focuses on cooperative projects enhancing deer habitat on private lands in the UP. Now in its' seventeenth year, over \$1,250,000.00 of deer hunting license dollars have been invested into UP deer habitat through the DHPI program, with an additional \$900,000 of matching funds contributed through partners in over 148 projects, enhancing thousands of acres of deer habitat in nearly all UP counties. - The request for grant proposals opened on Monday, February 3, 2025, with a total of \$100,000 available to award as grants through the DHPI program. Grants awarded in 2025 will range from a minimum of \$2,000 to a maximum of \$15,000 and require a 25% project match from partners in the form of financial or in-kind contributions. Completed applications must be sent or emailed to: Bill Scullon, Field Operations Manager, Norway DNR Field Office, 520 West US Hwy 2, Norway MI 49870 by close of business on Monday, March 14, 2025. Final notification of project selection process will occur by April 4, 2025. - Complete grant materials are available online at DNR Wildlife Grants page or type www.michigan.gov/dnrgrants then follow the Deer Habitat Improvement Partnership Initiative link.
- **Winter Conditions and the Impact on Deer:** Winter conditions so far have been tracking near historic (past 20 years) averages. As of March 3rd, we have well surpassed the half-way point of monitoring snow conditions and the average region-wide snow depth is 17 inches, just below the long-term UP average of 20 inches. The accumulated number of days with snow on the ground greater than 12" deep is now 53 days, while the long-term average for this time of year is 52 days. Staff will opportunistically monitor deer wintering complex activity this winter as snow conditions allow.

- **UP Aerial Moose Survey:** UP staff recently completed an aerial winter moose survey to estimate population size. WLD conducts this survey every two years. Despite unfavorable weather grounding DNR aircraft for several days at a time, we were able to complete the survey on Saturday, February 1st. WLD Research Staff will be analyzing the data and will have results available later this summer. When results become available, WLD will report to the WUPCAC at a future meeting.

PRELIMINARY

2024 BEAR HUNT - REGISTRATION RESULTS Page 1
State Licensed Hunter Harvest

BMU	DESIRED HARVEST	BEARS		% of QUOTA	
		REGISTERED	QUOTA	REGISTERED	
Bergland	200	253	920	28	
Baraga	300	353	1540	23	
Amasa	165	177	500	35	
Carney	116	159	550	29	
Gwinn	150	212	885	24	
Newberry	260	328	1005	33	
Drummond Island	5	5	6	83	
Zone 1	1196	1487	5406	28	
Red Oak	317	345	685	50	
Baldwin	185	151	395	38	
Gladwin	26	43	100	43	
Zone 2	528	539	1180	46	
Total*	1724	2026	6586	31	

- **UP Deer Camp Survey:** Deer hunters from across the UP contribute data from the 16-day firearm season to provide DNR staff and hunters with feedback on the status of the deer herd and hunting satisfaction soon after the season ends. Data from camps across the UP was collected and is being analyzed with results expected to be released soon. WLD will present results at the May WUPCAC meeting. Thanks to all the participants for their interest in deer and deer hunting.

PRELIMINARY

2024 BEAR HUNT - REGISTRATION RESULTS Page 2

TRIBAL Bears Registered

Baldwin	3
Baraga	0
Drummond	1
Gladwin	0
Gwinn	12
Newberry	45
Red Oak	34
Total	95

- **2024 Bear Season Summary:** Please see the included tables for preliminary harvest numbers for the 2024 bear season. In general, the western UP had good hunter success rates and resulting harvest levels that are relatively consistent with what they have been for several years. The eastern UP had very good success rates that reflect the increasing harvest and trends in abundance we've seen in recent years. The NLP rebounded after the dip we saw in harvest and success last year (likely due to abundant natural foods last season), and harvest levels were very similar to previous years.

SEX DISTRIBUTION BY UNIT OF HARVEST (State Licensed Hunter Harvest)

UNIT	UNKNOWN	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	% FEMALES
BERGLAND	0	146	107	253	42
BARAGA	0	204	149	353	42
AMASA	0	100	77	177	44
CARNEY	0	100	59	159	37
GWINN	0	121	91	212	43
NEWBERRY	0	183	145	328	44
DRUMMOND	0	4	1	5	20
ZONE 1*	0	858	629	1487	42
RED OAK	0	183	162	345	47
BALDWIN	0	69	82	151	54
GLADWIN	0	18	25	43	58
ZONE 2*	0	270	269	539	50
TOTAL*	0	1128	898	2026	44

Law Enforcement Division (LED): Lt. Ryan Aho, District 1 Law Supervisor– Western UP

- COs Zach Painter and Ethen Mapes were on patrol near White Pine when they were dispatched to a structure fire in town with possible occupants inside. COs Painter and Mapes were the first on scene and were able to break windows on the bedroom and living room walls to find the occupants. Half of the house was engulfed in flames and smoke. The house appeared to be empty, and a bystander advised that there were two missing snowmobiles from the yard. COs Painter and Mapes assisted the fire crew and were able to confirm that the occupants were on a snowmobile ride.
- COs Zach Painter, Brian Lasanen, Byron Parks, and Pete Shambaugh conducted a snowmobile patrol in Houghton and Keweenaw Counties in conjunction with the Copper Dog 150 sled dog race. The COs assisted

with high visibility patrols along the race route to educate snowmobilers of the multi-use traffic. The patrols were done with the assistance of the Houghton and Keweenaw snowmobile patrol units.

- CO Jenni Lehto was requested to guest speak at Michigan Department of Health and Human Services' Pediatric Education Hour, a virtual program held monthly, offering continuing education opportunities for EMS and health care providers. The program wanted to highlight winter traumas during the month of February and asked CO Lehto to share safety tips regarding cold weather emergencies and ice safety.
- CO Alex VanWagner was on stationary patrol on Trail 16 in Iron County and observed a snowmobile go through a stop sign at a high rate of speed without stopping. The operator was stopped and issued a citation for careless operation.
- COs Alex VanWagner, Zach Painter, Steve Sajtar, and Sergeant Brian Bacon conducted a group patrol in Iron and Gogebic Counties focused on snowmobile enforcement. Hundreds of sleds were on the trails and many contacts were made. 13 citations were issued for violations related to careless operation and registration/trail permit violations. Many other verbal warnings were given for similar violations.
- While on snowmobile patrol in Iron County, CO Alex VanWagner observed a snowmobile run a stop sign at a high rate of speed. The operator was contacted regarding the violation and was found to have a revoked driver's license. The sled did not have a trail sticker and the registration was expired. The driver admitted to going through the stop sign at 45 mph. All the violations were addressed, and enforcement action was taken.
- CO Alex VanWagner stopped two snowmobiles on the trail in Iron County for expired registrations. One of the operators did not have a valid driver's license and there was no paperwork for either sled. The violations were addressed with both subjects and enforcement action was taken.
- CO Alex VanWagner responded to a moose versus vehicle with Iron County deputies north of Amasa on US 141. The moose was deceased upon arrival. It will be processed and donated.
- CO Steve Sajtar responded to assist a school resource officer (SRO) with a suicidal juvenile in northern Menominee County. While at school, the juvenile made explicit statements to his parents explaining how he planned to commit suicide. When the SRO attempted to contact the juvenile, the juvenile fled the school on foot and hid behind a snowbank. Eventually, the juvenile ran back into the high school and caused a disturbance. CO Sajtar recognized the juvenile's name from an incident that occurred approximately one year prior. The juvenile was apprehended safely in the prior incident. After locating the juvenile in the school, officers were able to deescalate the situation. The juvenile was taken into protective custody and transported to a nearby hospital for a mental health evaluation.
- In Menominee County, CO Steve Sajtar observed an individual ice fishing on Lake Michigan shortly after dark. CO Sajtar contacted the individual fishing in their shanty and asked how the fishing had been. After talking to the individual for a few minutes, CO Sajtar asked to see his fishing license. The individual replied, "I must've forgotten it in my truck". CO Sajtar ran the individual through Station 20 DNR Dispatch to check for a fishing license and learned the individual had not purchased a fishing license in two years. Additionally, Station 20 DNR Dispatch advised the individual had been convicted in a nearby county in 2018 for fishing without a license. CO Sajtar confirmed the individual did not purchase a 2024 Michigan fishing license. A verbal warning was issued for using a tip-up without a name and address, or sport card number affixed. A citation was issued for fishing without a valid license.
- CO Jared Ferguson patrolled northern Iron County / Houghton Counties for snowmobile enforcement. CO Ferguson encountered many snowmobilers even though it was inclement weather. Eight warnings were given for fail to display a trail permit and valid registration. A citation was issued for fail to display valid registration (expired).
- CO Jared Ferguson was heading south on US-41 when he observed a truck swerving in its lane. CO Ferguson stopped the vehicle for suspicion of operating while intoxicated. The driver was found to be suspended, no license, no insurance, and improper registration. CO Ferguson was contacted by a local Sheriff's deputy who informed him he just wrote him two hours earlier for a similar offense. CO Ferguson continued his investigation and found the individual went home and switched plates from his previous arrest to a different vehicle and attempted a different route back into town. A report is being submitted to the prosecutor office.
- CO Jeremy Sergey attended a career day at Aspen Ridge Middle school. CO Sergey spoke to several middle school students about life as a conservation officer. CO Sergey also discussed the application process and

the importance of getting good grades as well as treating teachers with respect. CO Sergey explained that past behavior is looked at during a background investigation to become a Michigan Conservation Officer.

- COs Jeremy Sergey, John Kamps, Jackson Kelly, Steve Sajtar, Sgt. Mark Leadman and Lt. Ryan Aho attended the funeral of retired CO Robert Ball. The COs posted as honor guards during the funeral as well as being pallbearers for the service and burial.
- COs Jeremy Sergey and Anna Viau instructed self-confidence at the annual winter “Becoming an Outdoors Woman” (BOW) course held at Bay Cliff in Big Bay Michigan. BOW teaches outdoor skills to women of all skill levels over the course of a weekend.

Parks & Recreation Division-UP Trails: Ron Yesney, UP Trails Coordinator

Trail Specialist: Jeff Kakuk, Western Upper Peninsula

- Snowmobile Trails:
 - Early spring temperatures have had an impact in southern regions and created a challenge for our northern areas. Clubs have worked hard to keep all trail segments in great shape.
 - Several Trail segments have been closed for timber harvest operations.
- Long-time West UP Trail Specialist Jeff Kakuk retired from the DNR in early March.

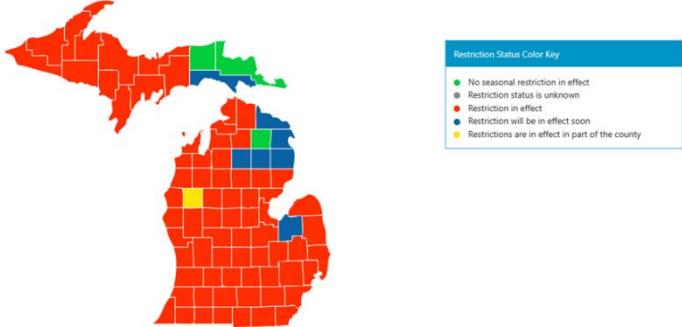
Trail Specialist: Rob Katona, Central Upper Peninsula

- No new updates from the last trail report provided in the January reports. Projects are moving along, and some are waiting for some funding before action can be taken.

Forest Resources Division: Tom Seablom, Western UP District Supervisor

- Field work for the 2027 year of entry (YOE) inventory season has started. Staff have been trained in an upgraded inventory system. The Baraga Open House is scheduled for June 26 at the Baraga Customer Service Center. Open House and Compartment Review schedules for the 2027 YOE are posted online under the Public Input section along with other state forest inventory information at: www.michigan.gov/forestinput.
- As of March 7, 316 timber sale contracts are open west UP-wide (WUP). This represents 1,073,646 cords of timber on 59,357 acres, valued at approximately \$37.9 million. Included in this are 28 Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) sales representing 136,121 cords of timber on 7,304 acres, valued at approximately \$4.1 million. As of March 7, 13 sales are available WUP-wide for the minimum advertised price. This represents 28,310 cords of timber. Find more information on state forest timber sales at: www.michigan.gov/timber.
- WUP units are reporting 33 active timber sales in the WUP totaling about 6,043 acres. We are receiving mixed reports from units with Escanaba reporting strong demand for most species and a shortage of break up wood in local mills, and Baraga reporting low interest in sales with few bidders and several no bid sales. The Gwinn unit reports getting several bidders on most sales and sales that have large amounts of winter ground. Sales that have poor access are more likely to get no bids or be bought for low prices.
- Commercial forest staff are working on inspections of already enrolled parcels for compliance. Starting January 1, open enrollment for the Commercial Forest Program continues until April 1. For more information on the Commercial Forest Program go to www.michigan.gov/commercialforest.
- Fire Protection staff will be refurbishing equipment and supplies, training and readying themselves for the 2025 spring fire season. Currently one wildland firefighter from Baraga is out of state on assignment in Texas as a Task Force Leader. State-wide there are 6 people out on assignment as overhead (Incident Commander type 4/ Task Force Leader/Heavy Equipment Boss/Fire Investigator) and 1 Tractor with 2 people (1 Operator and 1 trainee).
- Forest health staff have been doing hemlock woolly adelgid surveys, as winter is the easiest time to detect the pest at the base of needles. Coordinating with local Cooperative Management Area staff, surveys are

occurring across ownerships in the high-risk locations for infestations, particularly along the Lake Michigan shoreline. There have been no detections in the UP; however, populations continue to be detected further north in the lower peninsula.

- Utilization and marketing staff report statewide timber trends are picking up. After a quarter that saw almost 40% no bids on state timber sales, it has drastically reduced, although many sales are selling for a small percentage over minimum. Sales high in hardwood pulp are the sites still receiving no bids. Mills running hardwood sawlogs in the west UP are struggling to keep enough raw material on hand. Ottawa Forest Products in Amasa is currently running at approximately 40% capacity. Reasons for lack of wood moving in these cases is due to many logging and trucking crews headed down south for hurricane cleanup in the Carolinas. Word on the street is some equipment is being sold to southern producers who are offering large sums. Softwood pulp mills are in better shape, especially those that have migrated to container board packaging. Cereal boxes are a prime example.
- Potlatch-Deltic sawmill in Sawyer experienced a fire on Friday, February 28. The fire was contained to the planer and baghouse rooms with minimal disruptions to overall operations. A few days lag time is expected for investigations. There were no injuries and wood deliveries were not affected.
- Road restrictions are in place on all west UP county non-class A roads. As of last weekend, crews were scrambling to get wood and equipment out of the forest. A lot of wood was moved in 3 short days. Here is a snapshot of the state county map as of March 4.

Green	No seasonal restriction in effect
Grey	Restriction status is unknown
Red	Restriction in effect
Blue	Restriction will be in effect soon
Yellow	Restrictions are in effect in part of the county
- The WUP would like to welcome our newest employee, Chad Fortin. Chad will fill the role of WUP service forester out of the DNR Baraga Customer Service Center. Chad has been fortunate to have grown up and now raise his own family here in the UP. He graduated from Michigan Tech with a Bachelors and Master of Science in Ecology with a focus on wildlife, more specifically arthropods. He began his career in forest industry as a log scaler followed by procurement forestry. For the past 10 years, he's been a consulting forester working with both industrial and non-industrial private landowners. He enjoys getting his kids engaged with outdoor activities, chasing lake trout in the summer, and spending winter nights on the ice in pursuit of the wonderful burbot!

Fisheries Division: Cory Kovacs, Lake Superior Management Unit

Field Management and Tribal Coordination Update

- Lake Superior Management Unit and Northern Lake Michigan Management Unit field staff have been working on equipment repairs, boat and trailer upgrades, and rebuilding sampling gear needed for completing surveys in 2025. Remainder of winter work includes limnological profiles on area lakes to monitor winter conditions and specifically dissolved oxygen concentrations. Low dissolved oxygen concentrations in inland trout lakes results in poor performance and survival of stocked trout. Having this data is helpful when making decisions on managing these lakes.
- Kovacs attended the Teal Lake Ice Fishing Derby organized by South Shore Fishing Association. The fishing derby had 308 registered anglers and right around 65 of those were youth anglers. Kovacs visited multiple fishing parties to get a temperature check on the fishery, the anglers' experiences, and how they felt about the future of the fishery. Also participating in the Fishing Derby was Courage Incorporated who is nonprofit who offers veterans and individuals with physical disabilities an opportunity to hunt and fish. On this day, Courage Incorporated had seven veterans out with them. This was Courage Incorporated's third time participating in

the Teal Lake Ice Fishing Derby. Kovacs was asked to do a spot for the South Shore Fishing Association event and can be viewed at this link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VWPgisTwIFc>

3. Kovacs presented at the Fred Waara Chapter Trout Unlimited “Trout on Tap” fundraiser event in Marquette. The event featured a special labeled beer “Fontinalis” which was produced by Barrel and Beam (event venue) which when purchased offered 30% of the sales to the local TU chapter. The event had 118 attendees (normally 25-30) and was held on the eve of the Michigan Chapter AFS meeting at Northern Michigan University. Troy Zorn of Research Section also presented this evening. Fred Waara Chapter TU has partnered on a couple of local habitat projects and are looking to continue the partnership on future projects.
4. Interviews for the vacant fisheries technician position in Crystal Falls are scheduled for the 3rd week in March.
5. Audrey Baetz was announced as the new fisheries biologist for the Lake Superior Management Unit in Newberry. Audrey will be responsible for the eastern portion of the unit from Lake Independence east to Sault Ste. Marie. Audrey begins her position on March 17.
6. Jack Cole was announced as the new fisheries technician for the Lake Superior Management Unit in Baraga. Jack was previously a fisheries assistant conducting creel surveys on Keweenaw Bay and associated ports. Jack began his new role at the start of March.
7. The Crystal Falls and Baraga offices will each be staffing a fisheries seasonal state worker 04 position for the 2025 field season. Crystal Falls will welcome back their state worker 04 from 2024 again for this season, while Baraga is still looking to fill their position in time for the field season.
8. Lake Superior Management Unit, Tribal Coordination, and Northern Lake Michigan Management Units staff collaborated on the 2025 field work plan. Work plans are finalized and are already being implemented.
9. Staff attended the Trout Committee meeting in Traverse City in January and the Walleye Committee meeting in Saint Ignace in February.
10. Baraga staff designed and implemented a creel survey for Lake Gogebic to gather information regarding the proposed protected slot limit for walleye. A schedule was built to visit the most accessed sites on the lake and randomly selected weekend days and weekdays.
11. Mirror Lake in the Porcupine Mountains is scheduled to be stocked on March 11. Splake will be stocked using snowmobiles and will be a collaborative effort between staff from the divisions of Parks and Fisheries.
12. Tribal Coordination Unit staff participated in Lac Vieux Desert Adaptive Management Plan annual stakeholders meeting in Watersmeet.
13. Tribal Coordination Unit facilitated data-sharing and co-management discussion meeting between Fisheries Division and individuals from Keweenaw Bay Indian Community, Lac Vieux Desert Tribe of Chippewa Indians, and Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission.
14. Tribal Coordination Unit field staff continue to age lake whitefish samples obtained from commercial fishermen to inform Lake Whitefish population models.
15. Northern Lake Michigan Management Unit staff held a public meeting on February 10 in Iron River to gather feedback for a proposed walleye protected slot limit regulation for six lakes in Iron County (Winslow, Stanley, Hagerman, Lake Mary, Ottawa Lake, and Emily Lake) and Dickinson County (Lake Antoine).

16. Northern Lake Michigan Management Unit staff are working to address public comments received from the outreach events for the draft State Forest Management Plan.

Fish Production Section Update

1. Muskellunge are being overwintered in one pond at Thompson State Fish Hatchery. Muskellunge rearing was conducted entirely at Thompson hatchery in 2024 due to repairs being completed at Wolf Lake State Fish Hatchery. Overwintering of muskellunge is normally completed at Wolf Lake hatchery and this is a first run at holding them through the winter at Thompson. So far, these fish are doing well and larger fish (yearlings) are destined to be stocked into our broodstock lakes (Lake Hudson and Thornapple Lake).
2. Following retirements and recent vacancies, the Upper Peninsula (Thompson and Marquette) hatcheries now welcome a few familiar and new faces. Dan Korhonen is the new maintenance supervisor for UP hatcheries, Noah Rumney and Ryan McHugh are fisheries technicians at the Marquette hatchery, and Isaac Smalley is the new Trades Helper. Welcome to the team fellas!
3. Marquette and Thompson hatchery staff are slowly preparing for the spring stocking season. Between brook trout, splake, steelhead and chinook, there are close to 1.5 million fish to put into public waters. This activity starts in early April.

Marquette Fisheries Research Section Update

1. Field work continues for burbot work on northern Lake Michigan. Objective is to tag burbot with hydroacoustic tags and subsequently document habitat use and movement in Lake Michigan. Passive receivers are positioned throughout Green Bay and Bays de Noc to record fish when they pass within range of the receivers. burbot are being captured with traps set in rivers as well as with gillnets set under the ice in Bays de Noc.
2. Winter gear maintenance is progressing on schedule.
3. Fish aging and other lab work to process samples collected in 2024 is also progressing on schedule and will be completed before 2025 field work gets underway.
4. Planning for 2025 field season is ongoing. Survey work will include spring walleye survey in Little Bay de Noc, lake sturgeon spawning survey in Sturgeon River, lake trout survey work in Lake Superior, nearshore survey work in Lakes Michigan and Superior, and stream electrofishing for coaster brook trout research.
5. Northern Michigan University hosted the Michigan Chapter of the American Fisheries Society meeting in February and several staff participated in the planning and execution of the meeting. Techs Dan Traynor, Lydia Doerr, Wayne Heinzman, and Tyler Walls led a fish aging continuing education workshop as part of the meeting and provided expert instruction on fish aging to 19 attendees.
6. Chris Little and Shawn Sitar have been involved in coordinating and developing the upcoming creel survey at Isle Royale starting in June. The team is an interagency collaboration between the National Park Service and MIDNR. The last creel survey conducted there was 1998 and estimated some of highest levels of recreational harvest and release of lake trout in Lake Superior at 10,000 harvested with equal numbers released.
7. Recent publications from Research Station staff and collaborators include:
 - Zorn, T. G., K. Pangle, N. Peterson, H. Quinlan and B. Gerig. 2025. *Intraspecific variation in stable isotopes provides insight into adfluvial migrations and ecology of brook trout in Lake Superior tributaries*. Journal of Great Lakes Research. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jglr.2024.102487>
 - Riedy, J. J., E. A. Baker and K. T. Scribner. In Press. *Experimental evidence quantifying effects of nocturnal light conditions on predation levels by riverine predators on larval prey*. Journal of Freshwater Ecology.
 - Larson, D. L., T. O. Brenden, E. A. Baker, and K. T. Scribner. 2025. *Changes in lake sturgeon spawning periodicity is associated with prior reproductive effort*. Scientific Reports 15:3783. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-025-87717-x>

- Norris, D.C., S.P. Sitar, J.A. Olin, and G. Paterson. 2025. *Trophic ecology and mercury bioaccumulation among Lake Superior lake charr (Salvelinus namaycush) ecotypes*. Science of the Total Environment.
- Edwards, A.N., S.P. Sitar, A.M. Moerke, J.P. Doubek, D.L. Yule, D.D. Carl, C.A. Goldsworthy, I.C. Harding, S.B. Michaels, E.K. Berglund, S.A. Moore, and B.S. Gerig. 2025. *Food web structure of the Lake Superior fish community in 2021-2022*. Journal of Great Lakes Research.
- Goldsworthy, C.A., D.D. Carl, S.P. Sitar, M.J. Seider, M.R. Vinson, I. Harding, T.C. Pratt, P.P. Piszczek, E.K. Berglund, S.M. Michaels, and J.M. Barber. 2025. *Lake Superior fish community and fisheries, 2001-2022: An era of stability*. Journal of Great Lakes Research.
- Sitar, S.P., M.J. Seider, M.P. Ebener, S.C. Chong, C.A. Goldsworthy, I. Harding, S.B. Michaels, S.A. Moore, T. Pratt, and B.A. Ray. 2024. *Synthesis of recent research and attributes of recovered lean Lake Trout populations in Lake Superior, 1993-2022*. North American Journal of Fisheries Management 44: 776-798.
- Clapp, D.F., A. S. Briggs, J. Hessenauer, J.P. Holden, J.A. Kerns, M.S. Kornis, R.A. Redman, L.G. Rudstam, and S.P. Sitar. 2024. *Chapter 12: Coolwater and Coldwater Fish in North American (Laurentian) Great Lakes*. Pages 235-268 in S. Bonar, N. Mercado-Silva, and K. Pope, editors. Standard Methods for Sampling North American Freshwater Fishes, 2nd Edition. Bethesda, MD.

If anyone would like copies of paper(s) please contact Ed Baker, Research Station Manager, bakere1@michigan.gov.