



Western Upper Peninsula Citizen Advisory Council DNR Division Reports

Date of Production: May 2025 (Information current as of 4/24/2025)

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.

April 23	Michigan State Parks Advisory Committee, 2pm, (517-284-6135)
April 28	Board of Foresters, 3pm (906-458-6965)
April 29	Michigan State Waterways Commission, 9am (517-285-0747)
April 29	Upper Peninsula Habitat Workgroup, 10am (906-226-1331)
May 1	Western UP Citizens Advisory Council, 6pm EDT (906-226-1331)
May 8	Michigan Natural Resources Commission, 9:30am (NRC@michigan.gov)
May 13	Accessibility Advisory Council, 9am (517-897-6311)
May 13	Snowmobile Advisory Workgroup, 10am (517-331-6219)
May 13	Tribal Co-Management Citizens Fishery Advisory Committee, 10am (231-350-8654)
May 13	Equine Trails Subcommittee, 1pm (517-331-6219)
May 13	Off-Road Vehicle Advisory Workgroup, 3:30pm (517-331-3790)
May 14	Nonmotorized Advisory Workgroup, 10am (517-331-6219)
May 14	Trails Advisory Council, 1pm (517-331-6219)
May 16	Timber and Forest Products Advisory Council, 8:30am (517-582-3204)

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](#)

- Lurking invasives, a big dig and a little irony: Save the dates for these upcoming NotMISpecies webinars (4/16/25)
- Spring turkey season starts soon! Here is what you need to know (4/15/25)
- Ice storm: DNR trail and state park volunteer updates (4/14/25)
- About 750 miles of road-clearing, and what did we find? Community (4/11/25)
- DNR ice storm cleanup updates: State parks, trails, campgrounds (4/10/25)
- Showcasing the DNR: On the hunt (4/10/25)
- Interactive map shows northern Michigan roads now open following ice storm (4/9/25)

- DNR Leads Recovery Efforts for Michigan's Storm-Damaged Forests (4/8/25)
- April inspirations: Things to do, ways to help (4/8/25)
- As bears push further south in Michigan, here's how we can coexist (4/8/25)
- DNR Incident Management Team completes first 5 days of storm cleanup (4/7/25)
- Don't wilt, just wait: Delay pruning oak trees until mid-July (4/7/25)
- Inland sport fishing guide license required for guided fishing on inland Michigan waters (4/7/25)
- DNR News: Woodcock walk, new 'Wardens' show, NRC meeting Thursday (4/7/25)
- Burning ice storm debris (4/5/25)
- DNR trails in 12 counties closed indefinitely (4/4/25)
- Natural Resources Commission meets Thursday in Lansing (4/4/25)
- DNR, Michigan National Guard partner to clear vital areas of fallen trees (4/3/25)
- DNR to host public meetings on UP fishing regulations (4/2/25)
- DNR parks, trails, facilities closed following northern Michigan ice storm (4/1/25)
- DNR staffers live Thursday on 'Ask the DNR' (4/1/25)
- Downed trees due to ice, wind? Put safety first when cleaning up (4/1/25)
- DNR News: Freshwater fun, forest roads, CO academy blog & more (3/31/25)
- Purchase your Michigan ORV license and trail permit (3/27/25)

Grant Contacts

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

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|---|---|
| ▪ 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 in person on April 15 in Newberry at the new mass timber Newberry DNR office conference room. Four new members were introduced; the council is now fully seated with 20 members. Items discussed include a wolf management update (recurring agenda topic) with a potential delisting timeline, February meeting follow-up, a Michigan DNR drone program overview, a review of fisheries regulation proposals specific to the eastern UP, an update on the Sucker River H-58 replacement and sea lamprey barrier, and moose survey medial links were shared. Notable committee activity included a review of two proposed resolutions by the wildlife committee (#1-support ongoing moose research efforts and #2 recommend the development of a framework for a regulated wolf hunting & trapping season across the UP & allocation of resources for ongoing management program. Resolution #1 passed unanimously, #2 passed by majority (15 supported, 1 opposed). **The next meeting of the group will be on June 16 in Sault Ste. Marie.**

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

April NRC Meeting Recap – Ed Golder, Public Information Officer

The Natural Resources Commission met on the West Campus of Lansing Community College on Thursday, April 10.

The Commission:

- Approved Waterfowl regulations for the coming seasons, including a number of mostly small changes to last year's regulations.
- Rejected changes to dog training regulations for bears. Current regulations limit to eight the number of dogs that can be trained on a bear at any one time. This change would have limited the number of dogs on a bear to eight, allowing for an additional two dogs to be brought to a tree on a leash after the chase has ended and a bear has been treed. The Commission voted not to approve this change.
- Tabled for possible later action a proposal that would have expanded the coyote hunting season in Michigan.

Director Scott Bowen approved:

- Changing refuge closed dates at Pointe Mouillee State Game Area from September 1 to December 15 to September 1 to January 1.
- A May 1 oil and gas lease auction for state managed public lands.
- Two land transactions. Details can be found in the NRC agenda.

Committee of the Whole, Director's Report

Parks and Recreation Chief Ron Olson presented a lifesaving award to Park Ranger Joel Collinson, who serves at Silver Lake State Park. At approximately 7:30 p.m. on June 9, 2024, rangers at Silver Lake were notified of a child buried in sand dune in a collapsed tunnel in the park's pedestrian area. After contacting other agencies to assist, rangers responded to the location and began to aid in rescuing the child. After several minutes, they were able to free the child's head. Ranger Collinson pulled the unconscious child from the sand and carried the individual down the dune to the ambulance below and began performing CPR. In a scenario where every second counts, Ranger Collinson's actions allowed the child to receive life-saving care. He played a key role in helping to save the child's life.

Melinda Cosgrove from the Wildlife Disease Lab updated the commission on chronic wasting disease surveillance. Melinda explained our strategy of rotationally sampling different parts of the state to gauge the prevalence of the disease in the deer population and explained the science around sampling. We are in the final phase of this multi-year rotational sampling. Since 2002 the state has tested 143,797 deer for the disease and has found 261 deer that are positive for CWD. Going forward, we plan to use data from the rotational sampling plan to develop next steps and new objectives. We are beginning to work on revising our CWD plan for Michigan. We continue to consider research and models to better understand various aspects of the disease. We also continue to provide various options for hunters who want to have their deer tested.

Next Mitch Marcus and Emily Sewell from the Wildlife Division, along with Mike VanderKlok from the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, talked about surveillance for bovine tuberculosis, a disease that affects cattle and deer. The disease has been found in an 11-county area in the northeast Lower Peninsular. Since 1995 the state has tested 364,080 deer for the disease and found 1,044 that were positive for the disease. Dr. VanderKlok from MDARD said that in 2024 alone, his agency had tested over 1,400 cattle herds, identifying one infected animal. Looking ahead the department is looking at more efficient sample collection through building partnerships, including with processors, taxidermists and partner groups. We are also looking to revise the interagency memorandum of understanding on bovine tuberculosis that exists among DNR, MDARD and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Scott Larsen of the Wildlife Disease Lab gave a presentation on highly pathogenic avian influenza, which has affected wild and domestic animals, spreading especially through migratory bird populations. The disease is now prevalent throughout the United States and in Michigan. The disease has had a significant impact on agriculture in Michigan and has human health implications. The current public health risk is low – although one death has been reported from this strain in the United States – but officials continue to monitor the disease given that strains can change and could become more harmful.

Adam Bump from the Wildlife Division talked about proposed changes to small game regulations. The department is proposing expanding the December pheasant hunting zone, which will lead to expanded opportunity and will have no expected impacts on populations. The department is proposing no change to the timing of the woodcock season but is open to returning to the historic opening date. The department is also proposing several minor technical adjustments to the Wildlife Conservation Order.

Adam also discussed proposed changes to the fall turkey season. The department is suggesting changes that would expand opportunity for hunters and reduce regulation complexity. The proposal would reduce fall turkey management units to just

two – one in the Upper Peninsula and one in the Lower Peninsula. There would be no license draws, and all general licenses would be valid for all lands. There would be a limit of one license per person.

Chad Fedewa from the Wildlife Division reviewed [a number of recommended changes to deer regulations](#). This included allowing for antlered harvest during the Liberty Hunt and the Independence Hunt. The NRC removed that opportunity last year, effective for the 2025 deer seasons. The proposal also includes changes to antlerless harvest regulations in the U.P., and a number of administrative changes.

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).

April Legislative Update – Chris Semrinec, Legislative Liaison

HB 4191 – Creates a Deer Baiting License – Rep. Beson: 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 House Committee on Natural Resources and Tourism.
- The Administration has not yet taken a position on this bill.

HB 4206 – Provides Free Antlerless Deer Permits – Rep. Wortz: This bill would amend the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act to allow any individual to obtain two free antlerless deer permits with the purchase of a base license.

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

HB 4212 – Provides Commercial Fishing Regulations – Rep. O’Neal: This bill would amend the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act to create allowable catch per species and percentage quota for commercial fishing.

- 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.

HB 4285 – Provides Option for Hunters/Firearm Safety in School Curriculum – Rep. VanderWall: This bill would amend the Revised School Code to include the option to include the Hunter’s Safety course and firearms safety instruction in school curriculum.

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

HB 4308 – Designate Official State Butterfly – Rep. Brixie: This bill would designate the black swallowtail butterfly as the official butterfly of the state of Michigan.

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

Division Updates

Parks & Recreation Division: Doug Rich, WUP District Supervisor

Camping

Fort Wilkins Historic State Park	We are gearing up for construction this spring of a new toilet shower building in the West Campground.
Twin Lakes State Park	Twin Lakes will close for the 2025 camping season due to ARPA construction.
Baraga State Park	Camping is still closed for the season, but work on upcoming MIARNG IRT projects, STW hiring and preparation for the May 1 opening is underway. Big Eric's Bridge SFCG is already open and though the salmon / steelhead run has not been heavy yet, campground use has been similar to prior years.
Escanaba Field Office	Unit staff have begun cleaning up state forest campgrounds and preparing for the upcoming season.
Baraga Field Office	Cut down hazardous trees in Baraga State Park.



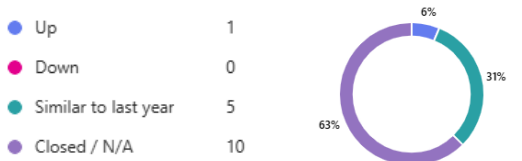
Overnight Lodging

Fort Wilkins Historic State Park	Mini cabin is closed for construction on the nearby toilet shower building.
Baraga State Park	Staff removed some hazard trees in the proposed alternate lodging locations for vendor built and maintained cabins.
Lake Gogebic Field Construction Crew	The Lake Gogebic Crew finished installing live edge counters at Wells State Park. The wood used was salvaged ash trees from Wells that were milled up and finished by the crew.



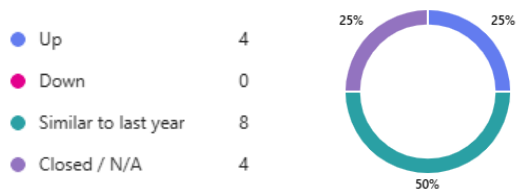
Boating Access Sites and Harbors

Baraga Field Office	Worked on skid pier refurbishment.
Baraga State Park	Use is beginning is to increase as piers begin to get pushed in and lakes open.
Escanaba Field Office	Staff have begun installing skid piers at unit access sites that are open. Many inland lakes still remain frozen. Anticipate installing multiple refurbished skid piers at Kipling, Cedar River and other inland lakes.



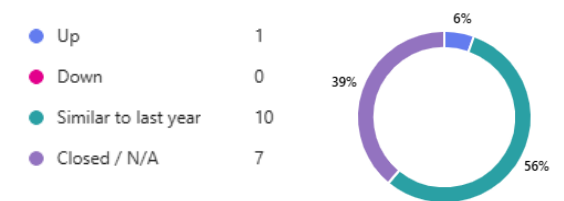
Trails

McLain State Park	Snowmobile Trails under McLain Management were extremely busy this winter
Baraga State Park	Snowmobile trails remained busy as snow held up through the end of the season.
Escanaba Field Office	Grooming season at Anderson Lake has completed, with overall conditions for the past ski season being fair to good. Days River did not fair nearly as well, with very little groomable snow all season.



Day Use

McLain State Park	With the Consumer Reports testing snowblowers this year people are enjoying a walking path throughout the park this year.
Bond Falls Scenic Site	We have had quite a few more event permit wedding inquiries this year than normal.
Lake Gogebic Field Construction Crew	The Lake Gogebic Crew refurbished the informational Kiosk located in the day use area of Lake Gogebic in April.



Design, Construction, Capital Outlay and ARPA Projects

Lake Gogebic State Park	We have reached the 90% submittal mark for the planning phase of Lake Gogebic's ARPA project for campground Improvements. We plan to have the project out for bids within a month.
McLain State Park	McLain's sewer lagoon will be complete this spring and the electrical replacement in the campground as well as new water system in the day use will be in the design phases this summer.
Little Presque Isle State Forest RA	Projects being completed through the contract that have been in progress for the past few months are continuing to move forward at the Little Presque Isle Recreation Area. The Harlow Lake Fishing Pier has been completed and is awaiting final inspection to officially reopen the fishing pier. It looks amazing and will be a great place for visitors to fish offshore. The remainder of the projects will resume as the snow melts and road restrictions are lifted for the county.
Fort Wilkins Historic State Park	West T/S building estimated completion date June 23, 2025. Planning for East campground upgrades beginning Aug 2025.
Van Riper State Park	Projects within the Van Riper State Park are all in various stages of planning/progress. The Michigan Iron Industry Museum is wrapping up its work regarding furnace repairs/replacement and roofing contracts. There are a few items that are still being addressed; however, the bulk of the work is completed and the museum reopened to the public a few months ago. There is a wastewater study project underway which includes looking at the current wastewater disposal system for the park and how to help bring the facility better into compliance with updated EGLE regulations. In addition to Craig Lake planning for the 2025 Innovative Readiness Training in partnership with the Michigan Army National Guard, there are projects at Van Riper State Park that are also being prepped for the same timeframe.
Twin Lakes State Park	ARPA project at Twin Lakes has been open for bids in April. hoping that construction can start in June.
Craig Lake State Park	Planning and purchasing continues in preparation for the 2025 Innovative Readiness Training in partnership with the Michigan Army National Guard for late May through early June at Craig Lake State Park. Progress meetings are becoming more frequent now to ensure clear communication regarding improvements and process steps for each agency.
Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park	Visitor's Center remodel is underway with great progress being made.
Esanaba Field Office	Staff have completed construction on 5 vault toilets that will be placed at various locations throughout the district- including State Forest Campgrounds and ORV parking areas.

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

Baraga State Park	Staff are working on filling the vacant non-commissioned ranger position and STW hiring.
Van Riper State Park	Two of the new park rangers from Van Riper State Park successfully completed the 2025 PRD Law Enforcement Academy at the end of March. A big CONGRATULATIONS to Ellinor Allen-Combs and Mitchell Travis for their hard work and commitment during their time at the academy. Welcome back to Van Riper!

Fisheries Division: Cory Kovacs, Lake Superior Management Unit

Field Management Update

1. Lake Superior Management Unit staff held a public meeting for discussing and gathering feedback on the protected slot limit regulation proposal for walleye in Lake Gogebic. This meeting was held in Bergland on April 8th. A total of 15 members of the public were in attendance.
2. Cory Kovacs made an appearance on the Ask the DNR show which airs on WNMU-TV13. The show is designed for the public to learn about DNR ongoing activities and to have viewer's questions answered live on the air. Ask the DNR airs three times a year with a show in the spring, fall, and winter.
3. Lake Superior Management Unit staff held a public meeting called Conversations and Coffee in Ishpeming on April 14th. These meetings are designed to gather public feedback on regulation proposals that are being considered locally and statewide. Regulation proposals discussed during this meeting were some local inland trout lakes, walleye protected slot limits, burbot daily possession limit, burbot hoop netting allowance, and offshore lake trout daily possession limit. Total attendance at the meeting was 18. At the meeting, TV19 conducted an interview with Cory Kovacs and provided a brief summary of the meeting in their article. This was the only in person meeting held in the Upper Peninsula to discuss regulation proposals. The next opportunity to provide feedback is during the May 1st virtual meeting facilitated by Michigan SeaGrant. Information is available on the Michigan SeaGrant website.
4. Mirror Lake in the Porcupine Mountains State Park was stocked with splake on March 11th using snowmobiles. Because Mirror Lake is in a designated wilderness area, access for stocking is only possible using snowmobiles and specially modified stocking tanks on sleighs. Holes are cut in the ice for stocking these fish. If anyone fishes in Mirror Lake, please contact Kris Nault for your fishing reports as these are very important for us to understand status of this fishery.
5. Lake Superior Management Unit staff attended the Copper Country Chapter of Trout Unlimited meeting to overview goals and objectives and to discuss upcoming projects.
6. Lake Superior Management Unit staff attended the Keweenaw Bay Fisheries Workshop hosted by Michigan SeaGrant.

7. Fisheries Division staff met at the Marquette State Fish Hatchery to clip splake that will be stocked in Copper Harbor this spring. A total of 20,000 splake were fin clipped as part of the ongoing evaluation to understand return to creel, movement, and success of the stocking effort. This is the last round of splake clipping. An estimated 65,000 splake will be stocked this spring in Lake Superior in Copper Harbor, Keweenaw Bay, and Munising Bay.
8. Fisheries Division staff participated in the Baraga Pre-Review meeting with Forest Resources Division. Fisheries biologists provide comments and recommendations on prescribed treatments for appropriate protections for aquatic resources.
9. Field staff is preparing for spring sampling season on our inland lakes. Walleye population estimates occur immediately following ice-out and will run for about a week using netting gear and electrofishing boats. Michigan DNR Fisheries staff, Tribal Coordination Unit, and tribal partners will be on the water this spring conducting these surveys collaboratively.
10. Field staff has wrapped up winter limnology surveys on inland trout lakes. These surveys collect information on dissolved oxygen concentrations which is a necessary factor for survival of trout. Dissolved oxygen in low concentrations can cause mortality events in our inland trout lakes and continuous monitoring is very informative for fisheries managers.
11. Michael Woodworth was announced as the new fisheries technician for the Northern Lake Michigan Management Unit and is working out of the Crystal Falls office. Michael started the week of April 14th.
12. Northern Lake Michigan Management Unit will welcome back the State Worker (from 2024) for the 2025 field season (starts last week of April) in time for some late spring fieldwork.
13. Walleye egg take on Little Bay de Noc was completed during the weeks of April 14th and 21st.
14. Operations at the fish lift at the Menominee Dam on the Menominee River to trap and transfer adult lake sturgeon above the first two dams began the week of April 21st.
15. Northern Lake Michigan Management Unit staff are working with the Habitat Management Unit and Parks and Recreation Division to plan for the removal of the concrete water control structure from the Rapid River Pike Marsh dam in northern Little Bay de Noc. This dam facility has not been used for 40+ years and is in disrepair.

Research Section Update

1. Research staff 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.
2. Net maintenance and lab work are on track and planning is underway for spring field season in Lake Superior aboard the Lake Char survey vessel.
3. Research staff have been working with University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point researchers to implant acoustic transmitters into walleye that utilize Little Bay de Noc during spring spawning activities. They hope to gain insight of migration patterns and habits of adult walleye over the course of an entire year in Green Bay.

Fish Production Section Update

▪ **Marquette State Fish Hatchery**

1. Tony Rabitaille, Maintenance Supervisor for Marquette and Thompson State Fish hatcheries has officially retired from state service. The loss of years plus years of institutional knowledge of fish production facilities will be missed. Fish Production is excited to welcome new Maintenance Supervisor Dan Korhonen for MSFH/TSFH.
2. Marquette State Fish Hatchery is back to being fully staffed following a fair amount of movement over the last six months. The hatchery is happy to have Isaac Smalley, Trades Helper, and Fisheries Technicians Noah Rumney and Ryan McHugh on board.
3. Staff are preparing for our first official Arctic Grayling spawn. An egg take is scheduled on April 29 to have eyed eggs available for the AGR reintroduction ceremony being held at Oden State Fish hatchery on May 12th. At this event, the eyed eggs will be transferred to our 3 tribal partners who will then place the eggs into the stream incubators that are placed in the selected rivers that flow in their region. Weekly spawning of the Grayling as they ripen with the goal of completing 3-4 total egg takes.
4. The Capital Outlay project to replace the brood isolation building has completed the bid stage. The contract will be awarded soon with construction slated to begin in mid-June and be complete by late September when staff will be able to use it to isolate our future broodstock that are obtained this fall.

▪ **Thompson State Fish Hatchery**

1. It is fish stocking season. Earlier weather impacts slowed things down, but they should still complete this activity by Memorial Day.
2. The federal mass marking trailer is coming to Thompson to mark Chinook, starting April 22nd.

3. One pond of musky was overwintered at Thompson to get them a little larger. They are to be held until mid-June at which point they will be near one year old. They will be sent downstate to lakes that will be used for obtaining future broodstock.
4. The hatchery is on deck to receive both steelhead and or walleye eggs starting later in the week on the 14th and projected to roll into the week of the 21st.
5. Capital Outlay projects are looking to start this summer with replacements and or repairs to the hatchery exterior façade as well as to repair and protect the outdoor concrete fish rearing raceways.

Wildlife Division: Dave Lemmien, UP Wildlife Supervisor (submitted by Bill Scullon, Lake Superior Unit Field Manager)

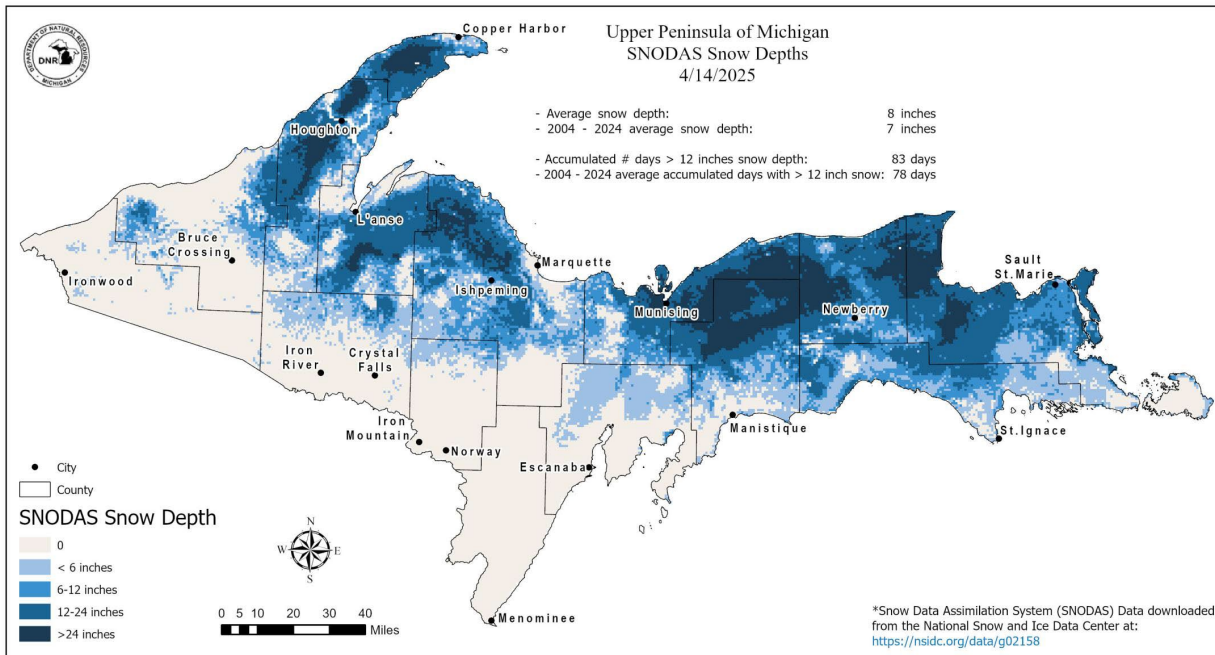
- **2025 DHIPI Grants Awarded:** This is the seventeenth year of the Deer Habitat Improvement Partnership Initiative grant program. Except for covid shut down year of 2020, we have used \$1,288,000.00 in Deer Range Improvement Program (DRIP) funds to partner with numerous partners across the UP on over 162 projects to benefit deer habitat on private or non-state-owned lands. For 2025 we have 14 projects we have approved and are funding. WLD has made additional DRIP grant funding available this year. These are funds already allocated thru legislative budget process to another DRIP grant program in the NLP that has since been disbanded. However, the funds are still available for grant purposes and the DHIPI selection committee felt we had a very good crop of potential projects that were all worthy of approval and funding. So, we are taking advantage of the extra dollars to further the benefits to UP deer habitat, sportspersons, and wildlife. We will be awarding a total of \$148,00.00 this year.

This year we have projects in Iron, Baraga, Goegebic, Ontonagon, Marquette, Delta, Alger, Mackinac and Dickinson Counties. Five are with Conservation Districts, eight are with sportsperson clubs and own is with a school district working on enhancing school forest properties. The projects range from traditional wildlife opening creations to hunter walking trail maintenance and establishment, tree plantings (i.e., hard mast, soft mast, conifers, and wildlife benefiting shrubs). Minimally 756 acres of treatments are proposed with the final numbers expected to be significantly higher. Grant contracts are being released right now and once all paperwork is completed a final listing of grant awards will be made available.

The DHIPI selection committee is composed of Bill Scullon (FOM and DHIPI program Administrator), Don Brown (Shingleton Wildlife Biologist), John Pepi (UP Communications Deputy) and Jason Caron (UP Service Forester). I'd like to recognize Don, John, and Jason for their diligence in reviewing all the applications and helping to shape the outcomes of each grant so our partners can be successful.

- **WLD Contributing to Northern Lower Peninsula Ice Storm Damage Response:** As the extent of the forest damage becomes clearer in the NLP, Department resources from all over the state are being leveraged to help with the cleanup. Wildlife Division is sending two skid steers with grapple attachments with a dump truck and trailer combination down to assist. We also will have several CDL qualified staff going down to use and move equipment. Additionally, Chainsaw qualified staff are going to assist as sawyers or swamper clearing roads and trails. As of the time of this report five UP wildlife staff are directly involved. Assignments will typically last for a week. Efforts are focused on opening access within the NLP state forest where roads and rails remain impassable.
- **Habitat Work Preparations Continue:** Despite the continuing winter weather impacts, delayed spring break up in many locations and the ice storm in the NLP, WLD staff continue to prepare for the spring / summer planting season. They are busily finalizing seed contracts, ordering trees, preparing equipment and finalizing plans for a wide variety of habitat improvement projects across the UP. Spring Prescribed Fire plans were recently paused as many FRD fire staff and staff from other divisions are being redirected in the short term to help in the NLP. Wildfire response planning and staffing remains the same. But prescribed burns will be delayed, and we will be looking at summer and fall opportunities to conduct those burns we have planned. I the UP for the first time most of our staff are wildland and Prescribed fire qualified. This adds capacity to our department burn program and helps to keep cost down and enable us to normally accomplish mor habit burns as well as bolster wildfire response.
- **Winter Severity Impact on Wildlife:** Wildlife staff continue to monitor winter weather impacts. Dave Jentoft and Caleb Eckloff run the SNODAS modeling which tracks snow coverage and duration across the whole UP suing NAOO data. Snow level of 12 inches in combination with duration of more than 90 days is something we watch closely as this will push winter into a severe category. As of last week, the warming weather had reduced the average snow depth to 8 inches from 12 inches the week before. The long-term average for his time of the year is 7 inches. Right now, some

areas of the UP are entirely snow free while others, especially this in the western highlands, Keweenaw peninsula, and the Lake Superior watershed of the eastern UP have lots of residual snow. We are still below the 90-day threshold for what we would characterize as a severe winter, but it will be impactful on wildlife. Overwintering deer are a primary concern. While reports are few, we have had some calls typical for this time of the year with deer being lethargic and in poor condition. The effects of winter will be felt by does with in developing fawns long after the snow goes. It is not unusual to expect continued adult mortality for deer in areas especially hard pressed. A cold wet spring will not be helpful for fawn survival or that of nesting success for grouse, woodcock, and turkeys.



- **Bat/White Nose Syndrome (WNS) Update (from John DePue):** Based on our underground bat survey work, population declines have stabilized and are starting to slowly increase from historic lows due to WNS. Even though some hibernacula are seeing increases, bats are still dying from the disease. We continue to work on a joint project with MTU to identify ideal hibernation conditions for bats to mitigate the impacts of WNS in Michigan. It has been a cold spring, but bats are now starting to emerge from hibernation and move across the landscape looking for insects (although few insects are present at the time of this writing) and summer roosting locations.
- **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>

Forest Resources Division: Tom Seablom, Western UP District Supervisor

- Field work for the 2027 Year of Entry (YOE) Inventory season continues. 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/gorestinput.

- As of April 21, 318 timber sale contracts are open western UP-wide (WUP). This represents 1,073,577 cords of timber on 59,052 acres, valued at approximately \$37.7 million. Included in this are 27 Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) sales representing 135,276 cords of timber on 7,272 acres, valued at approximately \$4.1 million. As of April 21, 9 sales are available WUP-wide for the minimum advertised price. This represents 20,596 cords of timber. Find more information on state forest timber sales at: www.michigan.gov/timber.
- WUP units are reporting 9 active timber sales in the WUP totaling about 903 acres. Current road restriction limit active cutting and logging in most areas. We are receiving mixed reports from units with Escanaba reporting strong demand for aspen, and Baraga reporting limited demand, but sales are still selling. The Gwinn unit reports aspen and pine with good access get the most interest. Sales that have poor access are more likely to get no bids or be bought for low prices.
- Commercial forest staff are working on inspecting new commercial forest applications. For more information on the commercial forest program go to: www.michigan.gov/commercialforest.
- Forest health staff continue extensive surveys for hemlock woolly adelgid, prioritizing areas along the Lake Michigan shoreline considered to be at highest risk for introduction. No hemlock woolly adelgid has been detected in the UP.
- Utilization and marketing staff report no bid sales are a continuing issue with 22% of state sales going no bid. Sales receiving no interest continue to be ones heavy to hardwood pulp, lowland sales, and sales with volumes under 500 cords.
- Prescribed burns are all on hold through the spring due to the clean-up for the ice storm. This has been deemed a Department priority over prescribed burning for the spring burning season. Staff that would normally be performing prescribed burns are all occupied with storm damage cleanup as well as normal fire suppression activities.

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 90% design meeting. Once designed, we will have a better idea of costs.
- The start of the 2025 license season is in full swing, with trail permits, ORV license, state park passport sales and fishing licenses being purchased on a daily basis.
- Along with daily operations, many of our western UP (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 Customer Service Center (CSC) had a contractor pre-bid walk-through on April 15 for a solar panel project for the building. The want is for a 2,000 sq ft solar panel array. Awaiting bids to come back for that project.
- Our Escanaba CSC had a vacancy for a general office assistant. Interviews were held and we are hopeful to fill the vacancy as soon as administratively possible.

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

Trail Specialist: Jeff Kakuk, Western Upper Peninsula

- Long-time West UP Trail Specialist Jeff Kakuk retired from the DNR in early March.
- New West UP Trails specialist starts on April 28.
- UP Trails Coordinator Ron Yesney is filling in until April 28.

Trail Specialist: Rob Katona, Central Upper Peninsula

Project Name: ORV Route Improvements & Grading Alger, Delta, Marquette, Menominee, and Dickinson Counties	Project Name: AuTrain River Bridge Repairs ORV C Route & Snowmobile Trail 418	Project Name: Nahma Grade Multi-use Trail	Project Name: Clowry Grade Bridge #6
Description: Multiple projects for filling holes, grading, gravel surfacing, culvert replacement and minor bridge repairs with multiple grades planned in high use areas to help prevent rough routes.	Description: Perform phase 100 study to determine necessary repairs. Bridge was closed in 2024 due to slumping and safety concerns.	Description: Design and construction 3.7 mile multi-use Rail-Trail in Delta County work includes clearing, surfacing and culvert/bridge installation.	Description: Design and rehab/construction of multiple bridges on this designated ORV/snowmobile multi-use Rail-Trail in Marquette County.
Trail Use: Rail Trails & ORV Routes	Trail Use: Rail Trails	Trail Use: Rail Trails	Trail Use: Rail Trails
Anticipated Completion: Summer/Fall 2025	Anticipated Completion: TBD	Anticipated Completion: Fall 2024	Anticipated Completion: TBD
Q2 Update: Some projects have been advertised and awarded. Others will be advertised soon.	Q2 Update: Bridge must be removed as it risks collapsing. All permits have been secured, and bridge removal project is currently being advertised with removal expected by early June. Design plans for the replacement structure are underway, however, additional funding will be necessary.	Q2 Update: Some additional surfacing work will occur this summer. Working towards connecting this grade with other ORV routes within the Hiawatha NF.	Q2 Update: Design for bridge #6 is at 100%. Will need additional funding for construction.

Project Name: Clowry Grade Bridges #1, #4, #5 & #7.	Project Name: Little Presque Isle Rec Area Improvements	Project Name: Days River Single Track Trail Construction	Project Name: Central U.P. ORV Route Dust Control
Description: Design and rehab/construction of multiple bridges on this designated ORV/snowmobile multi-use Rail-Trail in Marquette County.	Description: Trail repairs, parking improvements and boardwalk/bridge repairs throughout 42 sites at LPI recreation area and Wetmore pond.	Description: Approximately 10 miles of single track trail construction designed for mountain bike use.	Description: Perform dust control at multiple sites on ORV routes to prevent dust caused by ORV traffic in residential areas and other areas meeting criteria. Two treatments planned one for spring and one late summer or early fall.
Trail Use: Rail Trails	Trail Use: Nonmotorized & mountain bike	Trail Use: Nonmotorized & mountain bike	Trail Use: ORV
Anticipated Completion: TBD	Anticipated Completion: Spring 2025	Anticipated Completion: TBD	Anticipated Completion: Summer/fall 2025
Q2 Update: Completing preliminary items for AECOM to begin design.	Q2 Update: Additional bridge is on schedule to be completed by June.	Q2 Update: No new updates.	Q2 Update: Finalizing DOs for central and western UP sites.

Project Name: Tyoga Pathway Bridges	Project Name: LPI Songbird Trail and Harlow Creek Bridges	Project Name: Laughing Whitefish Falls Bridge	Project Name: Genes Pond Pathway
Description: Replace one bridge and replace or rehab second bridge both spanning the Laughing Whitefish River.	Description: Replace two popular pedestrian bridges on the LPI songbird trail and pathway to cabin #6 and north trail system.	Description: New pedestrian bridge construction on NCT over Laughing Whitefish River at the Laughing Whitefish Falls Natural Area.	Description: Construction of 1.75 mile accessible pathway with scenic overlooks adjacent to state forest campground located near Ralph in Dickinson County.
Trail Use: Nonmotorized	Trail Use: Nonmotorized	Trail Use: Nonmotorized	Trail Use: Nonmotorized
Anticipated Completion: TBD	Anticipated Completion: TBD	Anticipated Completion: TBD	Anticipated Completion: TBD

Q2 Update: Completing preliminary items for AECOM to begin design.	Q2 Update: Completing preliminary items for AECOM to begin design.	Q2 Update: Completing preliminary items for AECOM to begin design.	Q2 Update: Completed final plan review with letting later this year.
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PROPOSAL: Hiawatha NF ORV Routes Proposal	PROPOSAL: Ishpeming-Negaunee-Sands ORV Routes Proposal	PROPOSAL: Negaunee ORV Extension	PROPOSAL: Little Lake – Chatham RR grade ORV Route Proposal	PROPOSAL: Eagle Mills-Gwinn-Little Lake ORV Route Proposal
Description: Nearly 100 miles of ORV routes proposed to be designated that would provide connectivity and looped riding across Marquette, Delta, Alger and Schoolcraft Counties.	Description: ORV routes that would provide connectivity to several communities and looped riding opportunities in central Marquette County. Proposals are pending securing land permissions and/or trail easements.	Description: Extend ORV route in Negaunee along IOHT to provide legal RR crossing and access to roads/routes open to ORVs to the east. Work will include new trail construction and large culvert installation. Snowmobile trail will be relocated off of non-motorized IOHT to new trail segment.	Description: ORV Designate segments of existing RR grade and county roads to provide ORV connectivity between Chatham and Little Lake and beyond.	Description: ORV Designate existing snowmobile trails that are already heavily used by ORVs. Designation will allow funding for maintenance and provide direction for community connectivity.
Trail Use: ORV	Trail Use: ORV	Trail Use: ORV & Snowmobile	Trail Use: ORV	Trail Use: ORV
Anticipated Completion: TBD	Anticipated Completion: TBD	Anticipated Completion: Spring 2025	Anticipated Completion: Fall 2025	Anticipated Completion: Summer 2025
Q2 Update: No new updates.	Q2 Update: Finalizing trail easements with Cliffs.	Q2 Update: Additional work will be advertised later this spring.	Q2 Update: Working to acquire several more segments and get final determination on a few in question.	Q2 Update: Work is continuing.

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

- **CO Byron Parks** followed up on a possible illegal selling of a 400-pound rock that was apparently located and taken from the shores of Lake Superior. The complainant was concerned that the rock was taken from public property and if so, violating the 25 pounds per year that a person can take off public lands. CO Parks contacted the suspect at his residence and was advised that the rock was taken from private property.
- While patrolling Stephenson Township, **CO Steve Sajtar** observed a vehicle operating upon a public roadway with defective lighting. CO Sajtar initiated a traffic stop on the vehicle and contacted the driver. CO Sajtar recognized the driver as a suspect in a prior motor vehicle crash. After conducting a brief investigation, CO Sajtar learned the driver was operating on a revoked driver’s license and had multiple non-extraditable felony warrants out of Wisconsin. After gaining consent from the driver, CO Sajtar conducted a vehicle search. Multiple verbal warnings were issued for defective vehicle equipment. The driver was issued a citation for driving while license revoked.
- At the start of **CO Steve Sajtar’s** shift, Menominee County Central Dispatch issued a “Be on the Look Out” for a stolen motor vehicle. According to the Green Bay Police Department, the vehicle was stolen earlier that morning from a residence in Green Bay, Wisconsin. Shortly after leaving the Stephenson Field Office, CO Sajtar noticed a vehicle parked at a gas station matching the description of the stolen vehicle. CO Sajtar ran the plate through central dispatch and confirmed the vehicle parked at the gas station was stolen. CO Sajtar obtained a description of the suspect and located the suspect inside the gas station. After obtaining a confession from the suspect, CO Sajtar arrested the suspect for possession of a stolen motor vehicle, a five-year felony in the State of Michigan. A vehicle inventory search was conducted, and the vehicle was impounded. CO Sajtar later learned the suspect was on probation in Wisconsin when he stole the vehicle. The suspect admitted to cutting his GPS tether off in Wisconsin and fleeing the state in the stolen vehicle. The suspect had multiple non-extraditable warrants out of Wisconsin for violation of a court order, bail jumping, disorderly conduct, and larceny. A report was submitted to the Menominee County prosecutor and the Wisconsin Department of Corrections was notified.
- While checking walleye anglers on the Menominee River, **CO Steve Sajtar** contacted an individual fishing without a fishing license in their possession. The individual claimed to have purchased a Wisconsin fishing license but did not have any proof of purchase. CO Sajtar ran the individual through Menominee County Central Dispatch and learned the individual had an active arrest warrant for failure to appear on traffic charges. CO Sajtar arrested the individual after confirming the warrant. The arrestee was transported to the Menominee County Jail and lodged. A verbal warning was issued for failure to exhibit a fishing license upon demand of a conservation officer.

- **COs Jeremy Sergey and Jackson Kelly** assisted the Chocolay Police Department on a two-vehicle head on collision on Highway 41 and Green Garden Road in Marquette County. The COs assessed the medical condition of one victim and assisted the victim into an ambulance once it arrived.
- **COs Jeremy Sergey and Jackson Kelly** responded to U.P. Health Systems Marquette where a reported suspect was seen near the first level parking garage with a firearm. A thorough search of the area by multiple responding agencies turned up no suspect.
- **CO Jeremy Sergey** attended 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.