



Western Upper Peninsula Citizen Advisory Council DNR Division Reports

Date of Production: March 2024 (Information current as of 3/18/2024)

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 22	Timber and Forest Products Advisory Council, 10am (517-582-3220)
March 25	Western UP Citizens' Advisory Council, 6pm, Baraga (906-226-1331)
March 26	Trails Advisory Council, 1pm, (517-331-6219)
April 4	Eastern UP Citizens' Advisory Council, 6pm, Manistique (906-226-1331)
April 11	Natural Resources Commission, 9am, Lansing (nrc@michigan.gov)
May 30	Western UP Citizens' Advisory Council, 6pm Eastern/5pm Central, Ironwood (906-226-1331)

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](#)

Stay tuned for lots of activities at UP State Parks when spring arrives!

Recent DNR Press Releases

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

- Allowable e-bike use would expand with land use change (3/15/24)
- Quick and effective actions save ice fisherman in Ontonagon County (3/14/24)
- Showcasing the DNR: Developing a new way to estimate UP wolf abundance (3/14/24)
- Friday is Conservation Officer Appreciate Day (3/14/24)
- Visitors reminded about upcoming state park closures (3/12/24)
- DNR News: 'Wardens' and Detroit Lions, new 'Wildtalk' and forester honors (3/11/24)
- 2024 spring turkey drawing results available (3/11/24)
- DNR urges motorists to use caution as deer are on the move (3/8/24)
- Showcasing the DNR: Still is still moving (3/7/24)
- Natural Resources Commission to meet March 14; draft agenda online (3/7/24)
- DNR News: Fire season, trees for bees, 'Wild Times' stories and more (3/6/24)
- March "Wildtalk" podcast episode now available (3/2/24)
- Great Lakes Fishing Decree takes effect (3/1/24)
- State awards \$3.6 million for invasive species projects (3/1/24)
- New license requirement for inland fishing guides begins March 1 (3/1/24)
- Showcasing the DNR: Keeping Michigan's forests healthy in face of invaders (3/1/24)

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 |

March NRC Meeting Summary – Ed Golder, Public Information Officer

The Natural Resources Commission met on the downtown campus of Lansing Community College today. I was unable to attend, so I am providing only the highlights, including the major actions that were taken:

The Commission approved revised [furbearer regulations](#). These changes will:

- Change the bobcat trapping season in the Upper Peninsula, retaining the same number of days in the season but shifting dates for better conditions and to avoid conflict with the firearm deer season.
- Allow a second bobcat tag to be used on both private and public land in Unit A, which is most of the Upper Peninsula. Currently the second tag can be used only on private land in this unit. The proposal will expand opportunity.
- Change fisher and marten bag limits. Currently, the bag limit is two, of which only one can be a fisher. The change will allow for the harvest of two of any combination. The change will simplify regulations and expand opportunity.
- Allow centerfire firearms of .269 caliber or less to be used at night in the limited firearm deer zone on public and private lands to hunt coyote, fox, raccoon, and opossum. Currently, centerfire firearms are allowed in this zone – which is in the southern Lower Peninsula -- on private land only. The change will increase opportunity and simplify regulations with no expected safety concerns.
- Change the coyote hunting season statewide to July 15 through April 15. Currently coyote hunting is allowed year round. The change will avoid the time when coyotes have dependent young, and it will be consistent with our management of other species. The change will also address potentially negative public perception regarding coyote hunting and will not significantly affect harvest. People can still take coyotes year round on private land to address damage.

Director Scott Bowen approved five land transactions. Details of those transactions can be found in [the NRC agenda](#).

Other topics of presentation and discussion at the meeting included:

- An [update on invasive carp](#) by Lucas Nathan of Fisheries and Tammy Newcomb of Executive in the Fisheries Committee.
- A presentation on White-tailed Deer Predation in the Upper Peninsula by Jerrold Belant of Michigan State University in the Wildlife Committee.
- A Hunter Education 40 Years of Service Award presented by Law Enforcement Division Chief Jason Haines to recipient Gerry Dibble.
- The presentation of the Wildlife Annual Report by Dustin Isenhoff of the Wildlife Division.
- A [presentation on the 2024-2025 Migratory Game Bird Hunting Seasons](#) by Barb Avers of Wildlife.
- A [presentation on proposed changes to Elk Regulations](#) by Chad Stewart of the Wildlife Division.
- An update on the Deer Management Initiative by Chad Stewart.

A more complete NRC recap will resume next month.

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).

March Legislative Update – Taylor Ridderbusch, Legislative Liaison

HB 4021 – Include Definition of Peace Officer in ORV Laws – Rep. VanderWall: The bill would amend the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act to allow seasonal deputies, those not certified by Michigan Commission on Law Enforcement Standards (MCOLES) that have limited authorities, to work specific ORV patrols, similar to marine or snowmobile deputies that are currently allowed.

- The bill was signed by the Governor on 11/22/23, becoming PA 210 of 2023 effective 2/13/24.
- The Administration is in support of this legislation.

HB 4515 – Removes sunset on ORV License Fees – Rep. Hill: This bill would amend the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act to remove the sunset on ORV License Fees.

- The bill was signed by the Governor on 11/22/23, becoming PA 217 of 2023 effective 2/13/24.
- The Administration is in support of this legislation.

HB 4682 – 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 reported with recommendation from the House Natural Resources, Environment, Tourism and Outdoor Recreation and is awaiting a vote on the House floor.
- The Administration is neutral this legislation.

HB 5428 – Includes Recreation Passport Fee in Renewal of Vehicle Registration – Rep. Brixie: This bill amends the Michigan Vehicle Code to include the fee for the Recreation Passport in the vehicle registration renewal fee, with the option to opt out and receive a refund by mail.

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

SBs 103, 104, 105 – Provide Regulations for Commercial Hunting and Sport Fishing Guides – Sens. Cherry, Daley and McCann: These bills would amend the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act to provide for the licensure and regulation of commercial hunting and sport fishing guides and to provide the Natural Resources Commission with the exclusive authority to regulate hunting and fishing guides.

- The bill was signed by the Governor on 11/22/23, becoming PA's 220, 221, 222 of 2023 effective 2/13/24.
- The Administration is in support this legislation.

SB 441 – Provides Management and Regulation of State and Tribal Fisheries – Sen. Shink: This bill would amend the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act to update the requirements and penalties for submitting catch activity reports by charter boats, commercial fishers and wholesale fish dealers.

- The bill was signed by the Governor on 11/29/23, becoming PA 239 of 2023 effective 2/13/24.
- The Administration is in support of this legislation.

Eastern UPCAC Update

The **Eastern UP Citizens Advisory Council** met in person in Newberry on February 20. Agenda topics included a wolf management update, an update on the new Great Lakes fishing agreement, a UP habitat workgroup report, UPCAC

member UP residency requirements, a review of declining muskrat populations, the DMI process and DMAP harvest reporting requirements. A review of the DNR's response to the Joint UPCAC's resolution regarding implementing a Michigan moose hunt also occurred with additional discussion. An added agenda item resulted in an emergency resolution opposing the shortening of the coyote hunting season listed in WCO Amendment No. 1 of 2024, Item 6 which is currently under review by the NRC. A scheduled resolution consideration to allow December crossbow use in a portion of the UP was deferred until the next meeting for additional review. The council also held annual officer elections with both current chairman Tom Buckingham and vice-chairman Gary Gorniak successfully retaining their positions for another year. Steve Dey was voted in as the new Secretary. **The next meeting of the group will be on April 4 in Manistique.**

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

Division Updates

Executive Division: Stacy Haughey, UP Field Deputy

March 14, 2024 - Contact: [Lt. Ryan Aho](#), 906-235-7396

Quick and effective actions save ice fisherman Lake Gogebic in Ontonagon County

Sixty-three-year-old Paul Boehm of Ontonagon is lucky to be alive today after falling repeatedly through the weakening ice of Lake Gogebic Wednesday afternoon.

At about 4:30 p.m. CDT, Michigan Department of Natural Resources Conservation Officers Jennifer Hanson and Zach Painter were notified by Negaunee Regional Dispatch that a man had gone through the ice near Merriweather in Bergland Township.

At 13,380 acres, Lake Gogebic is the Upper Peninsula's largest inland lake, spreading across portions of Ontonagon and Gogebic counties. The lake is popular with anglers for its jumbo perch and walleye fishing.

Local temperatures had reached the low 50s by Wednesday afternoon.

A lakefront homeowner, Sue Barrette, who lives along Old M-28 near the Hoop 'N Holler Tavern, had called emergency dispatch after hearing Boehm yelling and seeing him crawling on the ice.

"She said she saw him sprawled out on the ice and a few moments later, saw him break through, and observed only his head above water," Hanson said. "She tried to reach him by paddle board but was unsuccessful due to a layer of ice that had him trapped in deeper water."

Barrette yelled to Boehm, telling him to "Hold on," reassuring him help was on the way.

When Hanson arrived, Boehm was well over 100 yards offshore. His wife would later tell police his ice shack was located a mile out onto the ice.

Conservation Officer Painter and Michigan State Police Trooper Paul Maxinoski of the Wakefield Post waded through waters near shore and attempted to help Boehm by throwing him a line with an ice rescue bag, but he could not pull himself out of the ice.

The two officers reached Boehm.

Rescuers from the Bergland Volunteer Fire Department and the Bergland Volunteer Fire Department arrived on the scene. Firefighters rowed a rowboat from shore up to the ice.



After the firefighters got out, Maxinoski pulled the boat over the ice to where Painter and Boehm were. They then secured Boehm in the boat.

Hanson and a Bergland firefighter waded out across the nearest section of water to the ice to help pull the boat to shore as Maxinoski worked to break ice with a paddle.

Lt. Steve Amsler from the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission arrived with an ice immersion suit and helped break the ice free to the boat so it could be rowed to shore.

Boehm was taken first by Sonco Ambulance and later by Beacon Ambulance to Aspirus Ironwood Hospital in Ironwood. The Lake Gogebic Fire Department and deputies from the Ontonagon County Sheriff's Office also assisted with the incident.

At about 10:30 p.m. Wednesday, Boehm was released from the hospital and was reportedly resting at home today complaining of minor ailments, including raw and numb fingers and bruised legs.

Hanson spoke with Boehm's wife this morning, who said Boehm was doing well.

"While he was exiting the ice yesterday, he first fell through about 100 yards from his shack. He had fallen through a few more times but was able to kick himself out of the water and self-rescue," Hanson said. "He crawled on his belly for quite some ways, but when he had fallen through again, he was so cold, wet and exhausted he could not get himself out."

Boehm's wife said Barrette saved her husband's life by seeing him, calling for help and trying to calm him while they waited for rescuers to arrive.

"Quick and effective action certainly helped save this man's life," said Lt. Ryan Aho of the Michigan DNR Law Enforcement Division. "This is an example of how things can go wrong quickly and turn into a life-threatening situation."

Today, a friend was able to retrieve belongings Boehm had abandoned on the ice, including his ice shack, cellphone and wallet.

Conservation officers remind ice anglers that there is no specific thickness of ice deemed to be safe. Always be prepared and cautious whenever venturing out onto the ice, especially early or late in the winter or during spells of warm weather.

Facilities and Operations Division: Jason Peterson, WUP Administrative Area Manager

(Working Out of Class)

- Area managers have been working on developing and completing multiple minor construction projects (LED lighting, general facility renovations, health, and safety improvements) throughout the state.
- Staff are gearing up for the 2024 license season. It is anticipated that customer activity will increase in March and April with spring turkey season, fishing license, ORV license and state park passport sales.
- Beginning March 1, 2024, all sport fishing guides on inland lakes and streams will be required to have an inland sport fishing guide license, in addition to a valid fishing license.
- Along with daily operations, many of our Western Upper Peninsula (WUP) staff have been engaged on committees looking at future customer service needs, an upcoming May 8th-10th division Inservice, and other training opportunities.
- A large HVAC renovation at the Marquette Customer Service Center will get underway this month. This project will be replacing the original system that has been in place since the early 1970's and is scheduled to begin on March 18th with an anticipated completion date in October.

Fisheries Division: Darren Kramer, Northern Lake Michigan Management Unit

Management Unit Update

- Units are busy analyzing survey data, data entry, survey write ups, prescriptions, and addressing equipment and maintenance needs.
- A walleye population estimate will be conducted on Portage Lake, Houghton County this spring. Staff from the Tribal Coordination Unit are leading the effort with assistance from other fisheries field units.
- Biologist Cory Kovacs attended the Lake Superior Technical Committee meeting in Ashland, WI. While in Ashland, Trout Unlimited held a Coaster Brook Trout "Challenge" meeting. This meeting was attended by USFWS, Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, MNDNR, WIDNR, MSU, and Michigan Tech.
- The UP fisheries field staff (Crystal Falls, Newberry, Escanaba, and Baraga) and Tribal Coordination Unit met to coordinate work plans for 2024. Technician staff along with fisheries managers collaborate during this meeting to ensure necessary projects have coverage and staffing resources are available for requested surveys and other division priorities.

- George Madison retired January 12th from a long and productive career. Since 1987, George has given dedication to the Division, one-liners, and many memories. Thank you, George for your years of service and good luck bluegill fishing in the UP.
- Becky Papke started creel survey for Munising and Grand Marais (February 1st). This marks Becky's 11th year conducting creel in Michigan.
- Cory Kovacs completed the Big Trout Lake, Marquette County, Status of the Fishery Report. The document encompasses nearly 100 years of fisheries management on this lake, which included the early days of Arctic Grayling reintroduction (1926).
- The Lake Superior Basin Team met in January. Topics discussed were burbot, Eagle Lake strain Rainbow Trout, walleye regulations, and attendees shared roundtable updates.
- Field crews attempting to conduct winter limnological profiles on area lakes were hampered by questionable ice conditions. Winter limnological profiles are typically conducted in early March. These profiles are important in making decisions for management of trout lakes.
- The Final Alternatives Report for Buffalo Reef was provided for a 30-day review period (<https://www.michigan.gov/dnr/managing-resources/fisheries/units/buffalo-reef>) that ended March 1st. The preferred alternative for the stamp sands is an upland placement site. The report compares three scales of implementation based on the volume of stamp sands to be dredged and disposed during the implementation phase. Additionally, the report provides details on the cost and duration of the operation, maintenance, repair, replacement, and rehabilitation phase.

Fish Production Section Update

- Many in-house projects, funded by FY23 capital outlay, are in progress currently. Maintenance staff at Thompson State Fish Hatchery are working to replace tank floor valves in the nursery rearing area. Fish culture staff are assisting in this effort.
- Fisheries technicians in all facilities continue working towards their pesticide applicators licenses.
- Hatchery allocation inventories are being pulled together for the upcoming stocking season.

Research Section update

- Staff are on track to finish net/gear maintenance for start of 2024 field season.
- Fish age estimation is progressing on schedule. Lake sturgeon aging and walleye OTC work has been completed.

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

- **CO Byron Parks** conducted a snowmobile patrol in Keweenaw County. CO Parks patrolled a busy snowmobile trail intersection, checking for trail permits and registration. Throughout the patrol, CO Parks contacted many snowmobiles and issued two civil infractions for failing to obtain trail permits.
- **CO Pete Shambaugh** observed an individual on the Bond Fall Flowage checking his tip-ups farther down the shoreline. CO Shambaugh followed the tracks to where the individual was fishing. Two individuals were located fishing with tip-ups. CO Shambaugh contacted the anglers and conducted a routine check. Neither angler was able to produce a fishing license for the CO. Upon confirming on both computer and radio, neither individual had a valid fishing license. Citations were issued.
- **CO Anna Viau** was on her way to Iron River to assist with an incident, when she was dispatched to a medical call in Crystal Falls for a newborn baby who was struggling to breathe. Upon arrival to the residence, CO Viau found the baby to be breathing and crying, but he still seemed to have something stuck in his throat. The mother was able to keep the baby's mouth and nose clear until EMS arrived. The baby and his parents were transported to the Iron River Aspirus Hospital by an Aspirus MedEvac ambulance.
- **CO Anna Viau** assisted with scene security around a house explosion that occurred in Iron River. There was nothing left to the house other than a foundation and a wide-spread debris field. Unfortunately, the house's sole occupant had been found deceased in the remnants of the house. Luckily, no other major injuries were reported. The nearby houses had sustained serious damage due to the force of the explosion and the residents had been evacuated for their safety. The exact cause of the explosion is still under investigation by the MSP and the Iron River Police Department.

- **CO Alex VanWagner** responded with local law enforcement to a business in Crystal Falls for a robbery in progress. The suspect was wearing a mask and had a large buck knife concealed on his hip when he entered the business and attempted to leave with a backpack filled with merchandise. Employees at the business were able to grab and hold the suspect until law enforcement arrived on scene. CO VanWagner assisted on scene and the incident was turned over to the Iron County Sheriff's Department.
- **CO Steve Sajtar** assisted local law enforcement with the search for a suicidal subject in Menominee County. The suicidal subject left her residence after telling her husband she was going to commit suicide on the nearby railroad tracks. After a few hours of searching, the suicidal subject was in the middle of a cattail marsh. Due to being submerged in ice-cold water for hours, the subject was suffering the onset of hypothermia. The subject was wrapped in a survival blanket, given hand warmers, and placed in the back of a heated patrol car to warm up while waiting for EMS to arrive. The subject was turned over to EMS for further medical attention.
- **CO Byron Parks** parked his patrol truck and followed two sets of footprints a half mile to a small inland lake. When he arrived at the lake, CO Parks could see a pop-up ice fishing shelter and multiple tip-ups set out. He counted eight tip-ups set out on the ice. As CO Parks approached the shelter, he observed a northern pike laying on the ice. CO Parks contacted the subjects inside the shelter, and both were holding fishing rods. He asked how the fishing was and who caught the northern pike. One subject said he caught the pike and that was the only fish so far. CO Parks asked what the pike measured, and the same subject said he didn't know. CO Parks measured the pike, and it was 23 inches. Michigan law requires a minimum length of 24 inches for northern pike. CO Parks addressed the multiple violations with both subjects, eventually issuing one subject a citation for possessing an undersized northern pike and the other subject a citation for fishing with too many lines.
- **COs Steve Sajtar and Shannon Wicklund** patrolled Lake Michigan and the Menominee River for the annual spring walleye run. Although the bite was slow, the COs contacted many successful anglers with brown trout and steelhead aboard their vessels. COs Sajtar and Wicklund contacted a vessel well into Michigan waters trolling for brown trout. When asked for their fishing licenses, the two men aboard the vessel admitted to not having Michigan fishing licenses, only Wisconsin fishing licenses. The two men had one brown trout in their possession that was taken from Michigan waters without a valid license. The fish was photographed for evidence and the men were each issued a citation.
- **CO Steve Sajtar** and Wisconsin Conservation Warden Gaven Brault patrolled the Menominee River for spring walleye anglers. CO Sajtar observed a male suspect catch and keep two walleyes, exceeding the daily bag limit of one walleye. CO Sajtar notified Warden Brault as the suspect walked back to his truck parked on the Wisconsin side of the river. When contacted by Warden Brault, the suspect admitted to catching both fish.
- **COs Shannon Wicklund and Steven Sajtar** followed up with an illegal taxidermist who was advertising his business on local social media groups. The taxidermist admitted to running his business without a permit for over a year. The taxidermist was cited for operating a taxidermy license without a permit.
- **CO Shannon Wicklund** and Sergeant Brian Bacon patrolled the Menominee River for fishing activity. One individual was observed fishing off the break wall. When asked for a fishing license, the subject replied that he failed to purchase one because he slept the whole way to Menominee and did not have time. He was issued a citation for fishing without a license.
- **CO Alex VanWagner** responded to a playground in Caspian for a call regarding a six-year-old kid stuck in a fence. Upon arrival, the kid had fallen between the rungs of a curved ladder on a piece of playground equipment. The child's mother was holding the kid up as the rungs were stuck between his hips and chest, and his feet were suspended from the ground. CO VanWagner grabbed a 5-gallon bucket from his patrol truck to support the kid's weight. Mom and the CO told the kid push down on the bucket while they shuffled his hips and were able to get the kid free. No injuries were sustained.
- **CO Jeremy Sergey** was travelling on M-28 near Munising when an individual passed him at a high rate of speed. After passing, the individual continued to speed up to 100 miles per hour. CO Sergey conducted a traffic stop and a citation was issued. COs Brandon Maki and Stephen Butzin assisted CO Sergey.
- **Sgt. Mark Leadman** was patrolling near Goose Lake when he heard gun shots coming from the closed Skoglund-Erickson Shooting Range. Sgt. Leadman approached and observed two subjects shooting rifles and handguns at the closed range. All of the posted rules at the range were not being followed. Their footprints in the snow showed

where they crossed over the gate that had a large sign posted "Range Closed". Both subjects were issued citations for using the closed facility.

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

Trail Specialist: Jeff Kakuk, Western Upper Peninsula

Snowmobile Trails:

- Lack of snow has had a devastating impact on the 2023/2024 season. Most Trail Sponsors have closed trail gates to protect lands that area closed to wheeled vehicles. There has been a large uptick in the call volume and trail use for ORV riding these past months.

Multi-Use Trails:

- Trail infrastructure failure continues to occur and impact many of the trail systems within the WUP. This trend should be expected due to age and condition of the system.
- Several ORV and Snowmobile Sponsors are partnering with the Ottawa National Forest to continue with the site surveys and engineering work on ten (10) federal rail corridor bridges that are at the end of their useful life. This proactive work will help ensure that structures are replaced in advance of emergency closures.

General updates:


- Public Act 10 of 2023 restored Prevailing Wage requirements for public projects financed by the State. This law took effect on February 13th and will apply to all grant funded projects that our Trail Sponsors administer. Guidance is expected very soon on how that will be implemented within the state grant programs.

Trail Specialist: Rob Katona, Central Upper Peninsula


- A majority of the central UP projects are waiting for construction season to begin. An updated report will be provided for the WUPCAC May meeting.

Parks & Recreation Division: Doug Rich, WUP District Supervisor

Camping


Fort Wilkins Historic State Park	The west campground will be closed beginning August 1 for construction of a new toilet building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Up 0 ● Down 0 ● Similar to the same period last y... 1 ● Closed / N/A 13 
McLain State Park	McLain is due for construction on an ARPA project to replace the Sewage Lagoon so the park will close to camping on August 1, 2024 for the remainder of the season.	
Baraga Field Office	Assisted with preparations for MIARNG IRT projects for Baraga SP playground community build and Craig Lake SP cabin.	

Overnight Lodging


Fort Wilkins HSP	With the poor winter conditions, winter lodging was down this year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Up 0 ● Down 6 ● Similar to last year 2 ● Closed / N/A 6 
McLain State Park	McLain Lodging remains closed this winter and will open when the campground opens in May.	
Little Presque Isle State Forest RA	No significant changes for the Van Riper Unit. Overnight lodging nights are down about 9% for January / February 2024 from 2023.	
Twin Lakes State Park	Lack of snow this past winter has very hard on the local and park winter rentals. businesses have had no snowmobile traffic, rentals, food, lodging during this winter. Many are closing now and not reopening till May.	
Lake Gogebic Traveling Construction Crew	Installed tongue and groove paneling to the ceiling and walls of the second story of the Lodge at Wells State Park in February.	
Van Riper State Park	The Peshekee River Rustic Cabin in Van Riper State Park is down 32% from this timeframe in 2024 to 2023. Staff is attributing the low attendance to the poor snow conditions.	

Craig Lake State Park	Overnight lodging at Craig Lake State Park is down 20 camp nights from January-February 2024 to 2023. With lack of snow in the area, there have been a few cancellations.
Baraga State Park	There has been discussion regarding alternative lodging concession with Baraga being included in the phase II bid process. This could potentially expand the lodging program at the park to 5-6 units with the maintenance and cleaning handled by the vendor.


Boating Access Sites and Harbors

Twin Lakes State Park	With no ice on Keweenaw Bay more fishermen are using the local lakes for ice fishing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Up 1 ● Down 2 ● Similar to last year 6 ● Closed / N/A 7 
Baraga Field Office	Yearly refurbishing of skid piers for Western UP boating access sites.	
Baraga State Park	With the temperatures rising, some of the Lake Superior sites have been receiving use higher than normal use for this time of year as they normally would be snowed in. Keweenaw Bay did not freeze over so use patterns are different, boaters are out already versus ice fishing.	
Escanaba Field Office	Winter use at boating sites has been down compared to last season- unseasonable weather was hard on ice conditions this year. Staff have continued other boating work, including equipment maintenance, constructing vault toilets for district placement.	

Trails

Fort Wilkins HSP	Again, winter weather was a factor in low trail use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Up 1 ● Down 9 ● Similar to last year 3 ● Closed / N/A 3 
Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park	Due to the unseasonably warm winter snowmobile season only lasted for approximately three weeks.	
McLain State Park	There is not much snow in the Houghton County area, so the snowmobile traffic has been significantly low this year.	
Bewabic State Park	No snow made for a poor snowmobile season	
Baraga State Park	Although snowmobile use was down, ORV, biking and pedestrian use was up. More ORV's, groups and individuals were out using the trails and walking in the park than typical for this time of year.	
Little Presque Isle State Forest RA	Staff had progress meetings for the Little Presque Isle Trail Improvements with the engineering company and contractors. Beginning construction is still anticipated to start the week of May 13, 2024 on already existing trails.	
Twin Lakes State Park	With the lack of snow, we are seeing a rise in ORV (side x side) traffic in February and March.	
Escanaba Field Office	Poor snowfall has resulted in low cross country ski use, but other uses such as walking and biking remained high.	
Craig Lake State Park	Trail usage within Craig Lake State Park is down this timeframe in 2024 compared to 2023 due to the lack of snow in the area.	

Day Use

McLain State Park	Day users are taking advantage of the light winter at McLain and are enjoying hiking around the park with little to no snow to worry about.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Up 3 ● Down 3 ● Similar to last year 6 ● Closed / N/A 6 
Lake Gogebic Traveling Construction Crew	The crew made improvements and upgrades to the Porkies ski chalet bathrooms in January.	
Baraga State Park	Even though the day use is closed, people are parking and using the campground and day use. Walking, biking, fishing, and taking photos of Keweenaw Bay have been the primary activities.	
Menominee River State RA	With unseasonably nice weather, we completed hazard tree cutting at Piers Gorge Unit, took down 214 trees.	
Bond Falls Scenic Site	There have been a lot more inquiries regarding access due to the lack of snow, along with this, there has been increased pedestrian use of trail access into the site as vehicular entry is still closed.	


Design, Construction, Capital Outlay and ARPA Projects

Lake Gogebic State Park	Planning continues for ARPA funded park improvement construction scheduled for 2025.
McLain State Park	ARPA project beginning in August 2024 to replace McLain's aged sewage lagoon.
Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park	Numerous ARPA projects are in process, the staff quarters building upgrades are nearing completion.
Little Presque Isle State Forest RA	Construction updates for Little Presque Isle State Forest co-managed by the Van Riper Unit, were included in the Trails Section of this reporting format.
Menominee River State RA	Waiting on Phase 300 design for Piers Gorge ADA access bridge at Piers Gorge Unit.
Fort Wilkins Historic State Park	In the planning stages for a new toilet shower building in the West Campground.

Bewabic State Park	Drilling company attempted to put in monitoring wells for wastewater ARPA project. Meetings for toilet shower building and asphalt projects continue.
Craig Lake State Park	Park staff have been diligently planning, purchasing, and finishing materials for the coming cabin renovations, road work and maintenance that will be completed as part of the partnership with the Michigan Army National Guard for the spring of 2024. Monthly meetings have been held to coordinate and work together on the logistics to bring successful projects and partnership for both the Michigan Army National Guard and the DNR.
Van Riper State Park	The Michigan Iron Industry Museum has continued to have progress meetings regarding the phased planning of improvements to the roofing, furnace replacements and hill slump on the entrance road. This has included museum, park staff, planning, and engineering staff to work together to find the best solutions to make the needed repairs to the facility. The Overlook Trail Earthen Stair Project has been put back out for bid with bid letting to happen next month.
Baraga State Park	We have been actively preparing for the upcoming playground community build with the MIARNG and other park projects, like the repairs to the North toilet building roof.
Wells State Park	Menominee BAS site Design for parking lot pavement and site improvements is at 50-90% completion.
Western UP Regional Field Planner	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ARPA <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Design <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Bewabic State Park - \$3.7 million <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Demolish 2 existing toilet shower buildings and build one centralized toilet shower building – Beginning Phase final design. - Resurfacing of asphalt roadways and parking lots – Final design = 90% complete - Construction of new on-site sewage disposal system – 50% complete with permitting and analysis. ii. Fort Wilkins Historic State Park - \$2.55 million <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Replace electrical system in east campground – Proposed for 2025 construction. - Replace toilet shower building in west campground – Bidding for 2024 construction. - Renovate Fort Stockage and replace roofs on Historic Fort Wilkins buildings – Proposed for 2025 construction. iii. McLain State Park - \$1,000,000 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rehabilitate existing lagoon – Proposed for 2024 construction. iv. Twin Lakes State Park - \$3,400,000 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Foundation repairs to day use beach building - Resurfacing of asphalt roadways and parking lots – Final design = 90% complete - Replace toilet shower building – Final design = 90% complete - Replace water lines = Final design = 90% complete - Construction of new on-site sewage disposal system – 50% complete with permitting and analysis v. Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park - \$6,683,000 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Resurfacing of asphalt roadways and parking lots at Headquarters and Visitors Center = Construction complete. - Expansion of Summit Peak parking lot = Construction complete. - Replacement of Summitt Peak vault toilets = Construction complete - Renovations to sewage park sewage disposal systems (lift stations, gravity sewers, and pressure sewers) – Construction occurring in 2024. - Renovations of Visitors Center – Construction proposed for Fall / Winter 2024. - Design of Union Bay Campground electrical system replacement – Proposed for 2025 construction. - Study of improvements to Ski Hill – Study is 90% complete. - Replacement of Presque Isle Stairs Structure – Design is underway. - Design of 2 bridges – Request for proposals has been advertised. vi. Lake Gogebic State Park - \$2,651,000 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Design of water line replacement – Proposed for 2025 construction. - Design of sewer line replacement – Proposed for 2025 construction. - Design of campground electric replacement – Proposed for 2025 construction. - Design of campground storm water improvements – Proposed for 2025 construction. - Design of renovations to sewage lagoon – 50% complete with analysis and permitting. 2. Parks Capital Outlay / Grants <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Houghton-Douglass Falls - \$600,000 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Design of driveway, parking lot, hiking trail, and observation platform – 50% complete final design – Phase 1 Construction proposed for 2024. b. Bond Falls Scenic Site - \$150,000 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Design of stair structure, observation platform, and river wall replacement – 50% complete final design – Construction funding needed. c. Menominee River RA - \$300,000 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Design of ADA access to Pier 1 – 25% complete schematic design – additional construction funding needed. d. McLain State Park - \$150,000 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Design of below ground pressure tank removal in day use – Design not yet started. e. Michigan Iron Industry Museum - \$790,000 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Roof replacement (portions) – Construction 2024 ii. Replacement of furnaces – Construction 2024

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> iii. Repair of roadway embankment slump – Construction 2024
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Waterways Capital Outlay <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Menominee River boating access site - \$1,150,000 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Partnering with City of Menominee to pave site, install additional shoreline armoring, and make site improvements which are desired by City – 90% complete schematic design. 4. Michigan National Guard Partnership - \$155,000+ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. 2024 Annual Training proposed for Craig Lake State Park, Van Riper State Park, Baraga State Park, and many recreation sites in Marquette and Baraga County. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. \$335,000 invested by DNR, anticipated \$500,000+ contribution of staff, equipment, fuel, and logistics from Michigan National Guard training. b. 2025 Annual training proposed for WUP as well.

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

Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park	Porcupine Mountains, again due to the unseasonably warm winter, the ski hill was only able to be open for three days.	
Van Riper State Park	Van Riper State Park is still working with HR to fill 1 fulltime ranger position within the park itself and 1 fulltime ranger position for the Forest Recreation complexities within the unit.	
Bewabic and Lake Gogebic State Parks	Accounting assistant Kristie Peterson left state service.	
Menominee River State RA	Seasonal and Lead Ranger position are in the hiring process.	
Baraga State Park	Staff has been working on STW hiring, filling the vacant maintenance ranger position, campground host positions and the MIARNG IRT projects at the park.	
Bond Falls Scenic Site	Hiring of STWs for the season has begun.	
Little Presque Isle State Forest RA	<p>DNR Director Scott Bowen visited Little Presque Isle and toured the facility during a recent visit to the UP. See the included photo with Van Riper State Park staff.</p> <p>Interviews were held to fill the Permanent Intermittent Ranger position within the Van Riper Management Unit, with this position responsible for the daily ongoings at Little Presque Isle. The position was filled, and the successful candidate started mid-February. A big welcome to Ellie Allen-Combs to the PRD family!</p>	
Fort Wilkins State Park	Peggy Tanskanen (Account Tech) has retired from state service with 32 years of seniority.	

Forest Resources Division: Tom Seablom, Western UP District Supervisor

- Field work for the 2026 Year of Entry (YOE) inventory season continues. The next Western UP (WUP) Open House will be for the Baraga unit on May 16th, 2024. Open house and Compartment review schedules for the 2026 YOE are posted online under the public input section along with other state forest inventory information at: Michigan.Gov/Forestinput.
- As of March 12th, 313 timber sale contracts are open WUP-wide. This represents 999,482 cords of timber on 54,167 acres, valued at approximately \$36.6 million. Included in this are 28 Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) sales representing 114,886 cords of timber on 5,968 acres, valued at approximately \$3.5 million. As of March 12th, 7 sales are available WUP-wide for the minimum advertised price. This represents 20,021 cords of timber. Find more information on state forest timber sales at: Michigan.Gov/Timber
- WUP units are reporting 31 active timber sales in the WUP totaling about 3,797 acres. Units report moderate interest in timber sales, especially when they have good access on high quality sites.
- Units have been focusing on getting a head start on the 2024 fiscal year (FY) timber harvest plan with about 48,026 acres planned for treatment statewide of that 12,010 acres are in the WUP.

- Although wildfire activity is low with the winter snows the fire protection staff is as busy as ever with equipment maintenance, training, and readiness for the upcoming fire season.
- Starting January 1st, open enrollment for the Commercial Forest Program continues until April 1st. For more information on the Commercial Forest Program go to Michigan.Gov/Commercialforest
- Welcome to the DNR Forest Resources Division:
 - Matthew “Matt” Yeo has accepted the forester position in Gwinn and officially started March 4, 2024. Matt graduated from Michigan Technological University in 2021 with a Bachelor of Science in Forestry and in 2022 with a Master of Forestry. He completed a summer internship with the Baraga unit and then in 2023 was hired and began working for Green Timber Consulting Foresters as a forester. Matt is an energetic, organized, team player who is excited to continue his career with the DNR. In his free time, Matt enjoys golfing, playing softball and scoring goals for the Calumet Wolverines Hockey Club.
 - In addition to Matt, the Gwinn Unit is welcoming two new foresters that have transferred from other parts of the state: Jacob Siler from the Escanaba unit and Sean Fischer from the Shingleton unit.
- Forest Health Program staff welcome two new employees:
 - A state-wide forest health entomologist, Erin Biggs, housed in Roscommon, to assist with programmatic planning and coordination.
 - A forest health forester, Pete Holodnick, housed in Marquette, to better survey for and address forest health issues in the WUP.

Wildlife Division: Dave Lemmien, UP Wildlife Supervisor

Staffing Update

- Each Unit in the Upper Peninsula (UP) will be hiring a non-career wildlife assistant (NCWA) to help with various tasks throughout the summer months, typically beginning in May. The hiring process is under way and the job posting was open from 1-22-24 to 2-6-24. NCWA’s typically help with nuisance bear issues, sick and injured wildlife, habitat projects and crop damage complaints among other things.
- Will be holding interviews to fill the vacant Baraga Wildlife Technician Position in April. Hoping to be onboarding a new employee by late spring/early summer.

2024 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’ sixteenth year, over \$1,150,000.00 of deer hunting license dollars have been invested into UP deer habitat through the DHPI program, with an additional \$800,000 of matching funds contributed through partners in over 132 projects; enhancing thousands of acres of deer habitat in nearly all UP counties.
- **The request for grant proposals opened on Monday, January 29, 2024**, with a total of \$100,000 available to award as grants through the DHPI program. Grants awarded in 2024 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 18, 2024.** Final notification of project selection process will occur by April 5, 2024.
- Complete grant materials are available online at DNR Wildlife Grants page or type www.michigan.gov/dnr-grants then follow the *Deer Habitat Improvement Partnership Initiative* link.

2024 Wildlife Habitat Grant Program

- The Wildlife Habitat Grant Program began in October 2013 and is funded from the sale of hunting and fishing licenses. The DNR administers the program with the main objective to enhance and improve the quality and quantity of wildlife species habitat in support of the [Wildlife Division’s strategic plan](#). Funding is available for local, state, federal and tribal governments, profit and nonprofit groups, and individuals through an open competitive

process. Minimum grant amounts will be set at \$15,000, with the maximum being the amount of funds available for that grant cycle. The 2024 overall available grant amount is approximately \$1 million.

- Applications opened **January 31** and must be submitted through the [MiGrants system](#) no later than **March 18** to be considered for funding. Successful grant applications will be announced in early summer 2024. The [detailed program handbook](#) and more information are available at Michigan.gov/DNR-Grants.

Winter Conditions and the Impact on Deer

- Winter conditions so far have been quite mild across the majority of the UP. As of March 11th, we are well past the half-way point of monitoring snow conditions and the average region-wide snow depth is 0 inches, less than the long-term UP average of 18 inches. The number of days with snow on the ground greater than 12" deep is only one day, while the long-term average from past years was 63 days.
- Staff will opportunistically monitor deer wintering complex activity this winter as snow conditions allow.

UP Winter Wolf Survey

- UP staff are involved in conducting the winter wolf track survey to determine an UP minimum count. The survey is a stratified random sample design with 13 of 21 units being surveyed this year. The survey requires staff to survey predefined areas using vehicles, snowmobiles, etc., to count and distinguish packs. The survey will conclude at the end of winter when tracking conditions become unfavorable.

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. Thanks to all the participants for their interest in deer and deer hunting.

Other Updates

- Some wildlife staff have been participating in wildland fire academy trainings in preparation for the 2024 fire season.
- Wildlife Division recently held a wildlife program coordination meeting with staff to discuss statewide direction including various game species regulations, invasive species management, climate adaptation, research needs and more.
- Staff are currently planning spring projects, outreach programs, developing project contracts and planning spring wildlife surveys.