

MICHIGAN WILDLIFE COUNCIL  
SEMIANNUAL REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE  
Public Act 451 of 1994, Section 43532b(18)(b)

Approved by the Chair of the Michigan Wildlife Council on May 14, 2021

The following is the semiannual report submitted to the Legislature documenting activities of the Michigan Wildlife Council (MWC) for the first half of fiscal year 2021.

As mandated by 2013 PA 246, the mission of the MWC is to develop and implement, in conjunction with a third-party marketing or advertising agency, a comprehensive media-based public information program to promote the essential role sportsmen and sportswomen play in furthering conservation via wildlife management and to educate the public about hunting, fishing, and the taking of game. Scientific wildlife management practices are essential for maintaining healthy ecosystems across the state, and these activities receive most of their funding from the sale of hunting and fishing licenses and the equipment used to participate in these activities. The mission is funded by a \$1 surcharge on all Michigan base hunting and fishing licenses.

The MWC has contracted with GÜD Marketing of Lansing to develop and implement the marketing campaign. Extensive research and a baseline survey conducted in 2015 were used by the MWC and GÜD Marketing to identify the campaign slogan, "Here. For Generations." as the umbrella for the Council's initial work.

The marketing team continues to employ a wide array of methods to distribute information to the target audience. These include more traditional messaging efforts such as roadside billboards, television commercials, online articles, TV and radio interviews, digital ads and social media ads through Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

From July 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020, the campaign garnered 121,576,617 impressions and 2,659,856 engagements (clicks to website, likes, shares, and video views). During this time, while audiences remained in their homes, MWC and GÜD Marketing delivered a robust video, digital and social media campaign that drove 74,000 NEW visitors to the website, deepening understanding of key messages. In addition, a more diverse set of messages (funding, wildlife, jobs/economy) was deployed to audiences through targeted "micro-campaigns", increasing younger audience traffic to the website and driving deeper engagement with older audiences.

From January 1 through March 30, 2021, the campaign garnered 20,988,726 impressions and 946,589 engagements (clicks to website, likes, shares, and video views). The campaign used audience-focused media and messaging to drive engagement, which outperformed benchmarks in many categories — content readership, video view rates, social media engagements, and positive sentiment. Notably, influencers who shared personalized content led to deeper and uniquely authentic engagement — this included Detroit Lions Center, Frank Ragnow, and three social media influencers sharing campaign messaging.

GÜD Marketing partnered with the survey research firm Responsive Management (Mark Damian Duda, Executive Director) to create and execute a 2020 telephone survey conducted between December 2020 and early January 2021. This was the first year a telephone survey was used instead of an online survey. It was determined that a telephone survey would be more representative, including people who have difficulty reading, individuals with poor or limited

internet service, and those who are intimidated by technology. (The U.S. Department of Education's National Institute of Literacy estimates that up to 43 percent of Americans cannot read beyond a "basic level.")

The survey was administered to 800 Michigan residents. The respondents were 18 years of age or older, and the survey was balanced to reflect the Michigan population by region for age, gender, and race/ethnicity.

Most of the survey questions are used each year to facilitate comparisons between surveys, however, a few new questions were incorporated. The team at Responsive Management reviewed results related to statewide high approval ratings of hunting and fishing and overall knowledge of wildlife management and its funding. The approval numbers increased in 2020 over previous years.

Mr. Duda summarized the survey results with three significant findings.

- 1) Key campaign audiences remain the same: Southeast Michigan, black Michiganders, young adults, and women.
- 2) People like to see a variety of messages. Conservation funding is an important benefit message but will require less reinforcement moving forward.
- 3) The existing campaign is not engaging black Michiganders, and more specialized messaging/imagery will need to be used to connect with that constituency.

The campaign strategy that was implemented beginning April 2021 is focused on promoting the benefits of fishing more broadly in the spring and hunting in the fall to give Michiganders a broad awareness of the benefits of participation in these sports. Gŭd Marketing will invest more in targeting communications, custom imagery, and messaging for each audience, focusing on young adults, families, and black Michiganders. Also, more time will be spent informing and arming advocates with key messages.

There are several significant events that will be of special importance to the campaign during the summer months. The Free Fishing Weekend in June will offer a chance to connect audiences with fishing. July is Michigan Wildlife Conservation Month, and it will provide a good opportunity to promote the outdoor activities. The National Amateur Fishing Tournament is being planned for August by Bass Pro Shops and promises to be a motivating event.

The council was in the news numerous times over the last year. The MWC joined with Michigan Sportsmen Against Hunger (MSAH) and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources to publicize the MSAH campaign encouraging the donation of venison from Michigan's hunters to serve hungry populations in Michigan. This past year nearly 91,000 pounds of venison were donated from Michigan hunters, supporting over 364,000 hot meals for people across the state.

The Michigan Wildlife Council contributed an article to the Detroit News and the Lansing State Journal which was published on January 13, 2021. In the article the MWC explained that one hundred years ago, the Michigan Department of Conservation — now the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) — embarked on a mission to conserve, protect, and manage Michigan's great outdoors. In fact, hunting is an integral part of the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation, a set of principles that have guided wildlife management and conservation decisions in the U.S. and Canada since it was put forth in the late 1800s.

Nick Buggia, Chair of the MWC, added, "Many people — including hunters — assume that habitat restoration and endangered species management is paid for by tax dollars, but it isn't. The majority of wildlife conservation dollars come directly from hunting and fishing."

Detroit Lions' fans took note in February 2021 when the MWC wrote an article featuring Detroit Lions Center, Frank Ragnow, for the Detroit News, Detroit Free Press, and Lansing State Journal. The article conveyed Frank's love of fishing the Detroit River and Lake St. Clair in his time off the football field and included recipes for his famous walleye fish tacos and Cajun potatoes.

As a result of restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic this winter, the DNR developed a way to educate children through virtual field trips. The council promoted these efforts. An interview with Kevin Frailey (DNR Education Services Manager) describes this program and is available on page 6. The video is entitled, [How kids can learn about the great outdoors without leaving the house](#). The interview was sponsored by the MWC and was shown on "Live in the D - WDIV" on December 17, 2020. It explains how teachers and parents can find "Nature at School" and "Nature at Home" lessons to help school-aged children learn more about wildlife and natural resources in Michigan. These programs were created by educators from the DNR that usually teach groups of children in-person. They are aimed at educating third graders through high school students but some of the videos can be adapted for younger children.

The 2021 Michigan duck stamp is a colorful piece of wildlife art that produced positive reactions even before it went on sale to the public. It was designed by John Roberts, a Saginaw Township wildlife artist. Marsha Standler, who coordinates the duck stamp program on behalf of the Michigan Duck Hunters Association, sees the new stamp as providing more funding for conservation programs that help the state's waterfowl. Nick Buggia views the duck stamp as an example of how the outdoors can bring people together.

"It's one of those Michigan traditions that help residents rally around the state's outdoor heritage, whether they hunt or not," said Buggia. The duck stamp made the news in three Michigan newspapers, and earned an interview on Fox 47, Morning Blend by Brenton Fetting, Acting President of Michigan Duck Hunters Association.

The current council includes:

Nick Buggia, (Chair) Mayville  
Matt Pedigo, Howell  
Jason Garvon, Brimley  
Ed Roy, Traverse City  
Hank Stancato, Detroit  
Kristin Phillips (Treasurer, DNR director's designee)  
Jeff Poet, Clare  
Beth Gruden, Perrinton  
T. Elliot Shafer, Grosse Pointe Woods

The MWC appreciates the Legislature's continued support and the opportunity to report on its activities since November 2020.

Respectfully,



Nick Buggia, Chair  
Michigan Wildlife Council

In compliance with Section 43532b(18)(b) of PA 451 of 1994, the Michigan Wildlife Council provides the following summary of Fiscal Year 2021 expenditures for the Michigan Wildlife Management Public Education Subaccount that was created within the Game and Fish Protection Account.

**Fiscal Year 2020-21 Expenditures for the Michigan Wildlife Council**  
(October 1, 2020 through March 31, 2021)

<b>Expenditure Description</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Research/Marketing/Creative/Media	\$1,090,000
<u>Administrative</u>	<u>0</u>
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$1,090,000</b>

## Michigan Wildlife Council Media Appearances

November 2020 – April 2021

### Content Marketing Articles

[Conservation is a team sport](#)

Crain's Detroit Business  
November 9, 2020

[Little Michiganders share big love of the outdoors](#)

Detroit Free Press  
November 20, 2020

[Little Michiganders share big love of the outdoors](#)

Livingston Daily  
November 20, 2020

[Little Michiganders share big love of the outdoors](#)

The Detroit News  
November 20, 2020

[Little Michiganders share big love of the outdoors](#)

Lansing State Journal  
November 20, 2020

[Michigan woods, water a great place for parents to bond with kids](#)

Detroit Free Press  
December 1, 2020

[Michigan woods, water a great place for parents to bond with kids](#)

The Detroit News  
December 1, 2020

[Michigan woods, water a great place for parents to bond with kids](#)

Lansing State Journal  
December 1, 2020

[Michigan marks century of conserving and protecting state's waters, woods and wildlife](#)

Detroit Free Press  
January 13, 2021

[Michigan marks century of conserving and protecting state's waters, woods and wildlife](#)

The Detroit News  
January 13, 2021

[Michigan marks century of conserving and protecting state's waters, woods and wildlife](#)

Lansing State Journal  
January 13, 2021

[What do Lions eat for dinner? Fresh-caught Michigan fish!](#)

Detroit Free Press  
February 15, 2021

[What do Lions eat for dinner? Fresh-caught Michigan fish!](#)

The Detroit News  
February 15, 2021

[What do Lions eat for dinner? Fresh-caught Michigan fish!](#)

Lansing State Journal  
February 15, 2021

[Michigan duck stamp continues to make its mark on waterfowl conservation](#)

Detroit Free Press  
March 11, 2021

[Michigan duck stamp continues to make its mark on waterfowl conservation](#)

The Detroit News  
March 11, 2021

[Michigan duck stamp continues to make its mark on waterfowl conservation](#)

Lansing State Journal  
March 11, 2021

## Media Interviews (Videos)

[Hunting & fishing licenses sales on the rise; increase in female participation](#)

FOX17 Morning Mix  
November 10, 2020

[Michigan hunters donate to fight hunger this holiday season](#)

Live in the D  
November 24, 2020

[Michigan Sportsmen Against Hunger](#)

FOX47 Morning Blend  
December 10, 2020

[How Michigan hunters are helping to feed needy families](#)

FOX17 Morning Mix  
December 17, 2020

[How kids can learn about the great outdoors without leaving the house](#)

Live in the D  
December 17, 2020

[Importance of conservation for diversity of our birds](#)

WOOD-TV eightWest  
January 25, 2021

[Michigan's Winter Birds](#)

WILX Studio 10  
February 1, 2021

[Ice Fishing in Michigan](#)

FOX47 Morning Blend  
February 5, 2021

[Catch rare sightings of winter wildlife in Michigan](#)

Live in the D  
February 24, 2021

[Find out more about wildlife you can see during the winter months in Michigan](#)

WILX Studio 10  
February 25, 2021

[Spring conservation efforts in West Michigan](#)

WOOD-TV eightWest  
March 9, 2021

[Duck Stamp Boosts Conservation](#)

FOX47 Morning Blend  
March 11, 2021  
Live in the D  
March 18, 2021

[Help preserve Michigan's wildlife by joining John Ball Zoo's FrogWatch program](#)

FOX17 Morning Mix  
March 23, 2021