

**Michigan Department of Natural Resources
1994 Public Act 451, Section 503(9) Report
Fiscal Year (FY) 2021**

With the enactment of Public Act 240 of 2018, the Legislature approved the implementation of the *Department of Natural Resources Managed Public Land Strategy* (Strategy) dated July 1, 2013. The Department of Natural Resources (department) is required to provide a report to the Legislature including the following information and to post this information on its website:

(a) Report on the implementation of the plan.

The Strategy includes measurable objectives related to three major goals:

- Provide quality outdoor public recreation opportunities.
- Foster regional economic prosperity.
- Protect natural and cultural resources.

On April 30, 2021, the department provided the 1994 Public Act 451, Section 503(10) report that detailed the progress the department has made regarding the three Strategy goals.

Key areas of focus in FY 2021 include the following:

- Reducing privately-owned lands within dedicated boundaries by 1 million acres.
- Reviewing 240,000 acres of DNR-managed lands that are 200 acres or less, isolated from other state lands, and are difficult to manage.
- Developing revisions to the Strategy in collaboration with stakeholders and local units of government.

When the Strategy was originally formulated, total state-wide land ownership was 4,589,000 acres with 3,889,000 acres north of the Mason-Arenac line and 700,000 acres south of the line. Since that time, an emphasis has been placed on acquiring properties located in southern Michigan. As of August 2021, the total state-wide acreage increased to over 4,593,000 acres, with the total acreage north of the Mason-Arenac line decreasing to 3,860,000 acres, and the total acreage south of the Mason-Arenac line increasing to almost 734,000 acres.

In FY 2021, as required by the 2013 Strategy, the department completed the process of reviewing the 6,569,500 acres within its project boundaries that were established in 2004 with the goal of reducing the boundaries by 1,000,000 acres. Boundaries are geographic lines that define the state's public lands acquisition and disposal strategy. The boundaries contain a majority of acres in state ownership, as well as privately-owned lands that would be a priority for the department to acquire if they ever became available for sale. With the reduction of approximately 1.1 million acres (from 1,994,000 to 889,000 acres) of privately-owned lands within the boundaries, the approved boundary areas now stand at 5,502,300 acres. The new boundary areas will allow the department to focus on acquisition priorities more strategically.

The statewide land review commenced in FY 2021 and is scheduled to be completed by the end of calendar year 2023. The department is reviewing properties that meet the evaluation criteria in batches of ten or eleven counties at a time and has included a public-facing internet

site ([State Land Review - DNR](#)) where the public can comment on the parcels under review. The parcels are classified into the following categories: retain in state ownership, dispose (at public auction), offer to a local unit of government or to an alternate conservation partner, or make available for land exchange. As required by PA 240 of 2018, before the DNR Director approves parcels that are over 80 acres for disposal, details of the transaction are posted on the department's website and published in a local newspaper, letters are sent to each local unit of government where the property is located, and a public hearing can be requested.

The review of 20 counties has been completed and the department has declared over 5,000 acres as surplus to be disposed of by land exchange or sale. Prior to any parcel being available at a public auction, it will be made available to local unit governments for purchase at the appraised value. In addition, over 1,500 acres have been approved to be potentially conveyed to alternate conservation agencies that would be better equipped to manage the parcels.

In FY 2021, the DNR Land Strategy Sprint Team completed the updated Strategy, and it was submitted for review and consideration to the legislature in July. The Strategy was developed with the engagement of nearly 400 stakeholders and members of the public to comment on the existing Strategy and the proposed changes, including the opportunity to complete an online survey regarding public lands. Presentations and facilitated sessions were made and virtual public meetings were held with multiple stakeholder advisory groups and councils. The goals of the proposed Strategy are focused on the following:

- Protect natural and cultural resources.
- Provide access to outdoor public recreation opportunities.
- Perform responsible natural resource management.

If approved by the legislature, the updated Strategy will be in place until July 1, 2027.

(b) The number of acres of land in which the department owns surface rights (as of August 2021):

Acres North of the Mason-Arenac Line:	3,859,879
Acres South of the Mason-Arenac Line:	<u>733,589</u>
Total in Michigan:	4,593,468

(c) Information on the total number of each of the following (as of August 2021):

- (i) Acres of land managed by the department: 4,960,000 (including leased lands and conservation easements conveyed to the department)
- (ii) Acres of state park and recreation area land: 359,801
- (iii) Acres of state game and state waterfowl areas: 364,161
- (iv) Acres of land managed by the department and open for public hunting: 4,513,135
- (v) Acres of state-owned mineral rights managed by the department that are under a development lease: 363,866

(vi) Acres of state forestland: 3,859,801

(vii) Public boating access sites managed by the department: 1,423

(viii) Miles of motorized trails managed by the department: 7,701.3

(ix) Miles of nonmotorized trails managed by the department: 2,585.5

In addition, there are 1,010.4 miles categorized as both non-motorized and motorized trails.