STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
LANSING

GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

M. SCOTT BOWEN
DIRECTOR

Dear Interested Citizen:

The Department of Natural Resources welcomes your interest in improving fishing opportunities in public waters of Michigan. As a private party, you can stock fish into public waters of the state, which requires a permit from DNR Fisheries Division. This permit is required to ensure that fish to be stocked are:

1. Healthy and will not pose a disease risk to populations in the wild;

2. A species that currently exists in the watershed and does not pose long-term management problems; and

3. A species that is compatible with the overall fisheries management goals in a watershed.

The permit process protects the state's fisheries resources by preventing potential long-term and expensive problems before they occur, thus improving fishing opportunities for all.

The permit process follows the following five steps and is detailed in the attached materials:

1. *Determining if the water to be stocked is public or private*. Water bodies that have permanent inlets or outlets will require a permit, as fish will escape from these waters into public waters. If there are no permanent inlets or outlets, the water body does not require a permit. Waters with public access sites are also public waters. If you are unsure about the status of the water body you wish to stock, please contact any of our Fisheries Management Unit offices for assistance (see Table 1).

2. *Applying for a permit if the water body to be stocked is public.* If the water you wish to stock is public, you will need to fill out the attached application specifying the species and how many fish you intend to stock. This allows DNR Fisheries Division to determine if the species is permitted for stocking, and if it is compatible with management goals established for the watershed. It is also important to determine if the source from which you intend to obtain the fish is free of certain fish pathogens (click here for information on fish health testing requirements), so be sure to inquire about the fish health certification status of the source you intend to use. DNR Fisheries strongly recommends that any applicant obtain a copy of the fish pathogen inspection report and certification from the source of the fish, as fish must be certified disease-free for stocking in the waters of the state. Although providing a copy of the disease certification with your application may speed the processing of the permit, it is not required.

3. *Submitting the Application.* After you fill out the application form, submit it to the

Fisheries Management Unit (see Table 1) responsible for the watershed in which you wish to stock fish. If you need help determining the right office, feel free to contact any Fisheries Management Unit Office. Our fisheries staff will review the permit and provide you with either an approved permit or a letter detailing why the permit was denied.

4. *Stocking Fish.* Once you have an approved permit, you can stock your fish. Be sure to pay attention to the expiration date of the permit. Please be sure to contact our Fisheries Management Unit Office about the stocking at least three, but not more than ten business days before stocking occurs. Also be sure that either an original or a copy of the Public Waters Fish Stocking Permit is on site during the stocking.

5. *Report Stocking of Fish.* After stocking, be sure to submit the Public Waters Fish Stocking Report to DNR Fisheries. The form for reporting of the stocking of fish is located at the bottom of the stocking permit. These data will be entered into our fish stocking database and will become a permanent part of the fisheries management record for the watershed. If the fish stocking report is not submitted, future stocking permits may be denied.

We appreciate your interest in our fisheries resources. If you have questions about this process, please contact a Fisheries Management Unit Office or Mr. Ed Eisch at 231-499-4118 or eische@michigan.gov.

Sincerely,

Randy Claramunt, Chief
Fisheries Division
231-622-3820

Michigan Department of Natural Resources
Fisheries Division

PUBLIC WATERS STOCKING PERMIT PROCESS

Revised January 21,2025

1. It is the responsibility of the purchaser or their agent to determine if a permit is required to stock fish into a water body. If a Public Waters Stocking Permit is necessary, the purchaser or their agent must obtain the permit prior to any stocking event. A copy of the Public Waters Stocking Permit Application is in Attachment 1.

    a. If the water body to be stocked is not permanently connected to any other water body and does not have public access, it does not require a Public Waters Stocking Permit.

    b. If the water body to be stocked is permanently connected to public water bodies via an inlet or outlet, the purchaser or their agent must obtain a Public Waters Stocking Permit.

    c. If the water body has a public access site, the purchaser or their agent must obtain a Public Waters Stocking Permit.

    d. If unsure of the need for a permit to stock a water body, the purchaser or their agent may request assistance from any Department of Natural

    Resources (DNR) Fisheries Management Unit Office. The offices and fisheries biologists are listed in Table 1.

2. The purchaser or their agent can obtain an application for a Public Waters Stocking Permit from any DNR Fisheries Management Unit Office, from the DNR website, or from many private aquaculture facilities.

3. The purchaser or their agent must return the completed Public Waters Stocking Permit Application to the DNR Fisheries Management Unit Office responsible for the watershed that is to be stocked. It speeds up the application process if the most recent fish health inspection and certification documents are included with the application. See attached Table 1 to determine which office is the appropriate location or contact any DNR Fisheries Management Unit Office.

4. DNR Fisheries Management Unit will use the following guidelines in its review of the permit application:

    a. Disease status of the private aquaculture facility – If the facility has a valid pathogen-free certification for key fish diseases, then the fish can be stocked in public waters. The fish lot number that the private aquaculture facility provided to the DNR to confirm that health testing has been completed must be included in application. That lot number should be obtained from the facility providing the fish for stocking. If the facility does not have a current or valid pathogen-free certification for key fish diseases, then the permit shall be denied until such information can be provided. If the fish have clinical signs of disease, they cannot be stocked in our waters. Click here for a list of key

fish diseases (see bottom of Table 2).

b. Species analysis – If the species is included in the list of species approved for stocking in waters of the state, the fish may be approved for stocking in publicwaters. If the species has not been approved for stocking in waters of the state, then the permit shall be denied. The list of approved species for fish stocked is in Table 2 here.

c. Management implications of the stocking — If the stocking action is consistent with DNR Fisheries management objectives for the water body and watershed to be stocked, then the fish can be stocked in public waters. If the stocking action is not consistent with DNR Fisheries management objectives for the water body and watershed to be stocked, then the permit shall be denied.

5. After review of the application, the DNR Fisheries Management Unit will determine if the permit is to be approved or denied based on Sections 4a, b, and c above.
6. Within seven working days of receipt of the permit application, the DNR Fisheries Management Unit shall provide either an approved permit to the purchaser or their agent, or a letter of permit denial designating the rationale for denial based on Sections 4a, b, and c above (see Attachment 2).
7. Purchaser or their agent must notify the appropriate DNR Fisheries Management Unit of the actual date of stocking at least three, but not more than ten business days, prior to the stocking event. This notification can be done via letter, telephone, or e-mail. Upon receipt of notification, the DNR Fisheries Management Unit shall provide a response to the purchaser or their agent that notification of the actual stocking date has been received.
8. The stocking permit must be available on site when fish are stocked into public waters.
    a. If a private aquaculture operation stocks the fish, they must have the original or a copy of the valid Public Waters Stocking Permit on site during stocking.
    b. If the purchaser or their agent stocks the fish, they must have the original valid Public Waters Stocking Permit on site during stocking.
9. **Note that the lower portion of the stocking permit is a Public Waters Stocking Report. Within 14 calendar days of the public waters stocking event, a signed Public Waters Stocking Report (see Attachment 2) shall be sent either by surface mail or email to the Fisheries Management Unit that issued the permit. Failure to submit the stocking report may result in denial of future stocking permits.**
10. Upon receipt of the report, the Fisheries Management Unit shall:
    a. Record receipt of the report.
    b. Enter the data into the DNR Fisheries Fish Stocking Information System database.
    c. Provide a response to the party that the report was received and processed.

Table 1. **DNR Fisheries Management Unit Offices**

Basin/Watersheds	Staff	Office location	Telephone	E-mail
Lake Superior All	Cory Kovacs	Newberry	906-293-5131	kovacsc@michigan.gov
	Audrey Baetz	Newberry	906-287-1646	baetza@michigan.gov
	Kris Nault	Baraga	906-353-6651	naultk3@michigan.gov
Northern Lake Michigan All Upper Peninsula watersheds	Jennifer Johnson	Norway	906-563-9247	JohnsonJ17@michigan.gov
	John Bauman	Escanaba	906-786-2351	baumanj@michigan.gov
	Darren Kramer	Escanaba	906-789-8213	kramerd@michigan.gov
Central Lake Michigan Mackinac Bridge to Muskegon River	Scott Heintzelman	Cadillac	231-775-9727	heintzelmans@michigan.gov
	Mark Tonello	Cadillac	231-775-9727	tonellom@michigan.gov
	Heather Hettinger	Traverse City	231-922-6056	hettingerh@michigan.gov
Southern Lake Michigan South of Muskegon River to Indiana border	Matt Diana	Plainwell	269-204-7008	dianam@michigan.gov
	Addie Myers	Plainwell	989-778-0389	myersa13@michigan.gov
	Brian Gunderman	Plainwell	269-204-7009	gundermanb@michigan.gov
Northern Lake Huron St. Marys River to Au Sable River	Tim Cwalinski	Gaylord	989-732-3541	cwalinskit@michigan.gov
	Neal Godby Matt Klungle	Gaylord Gaylord	989-732-3541 989-732-3541	godbyn@michigan.gov klunglek@michigan.gov
Southern Lake Huron South of Au Sable River to Port Huron	Jeff Jolley	Bay City	989-686-2678	jolleyj1@michigan.gov
	April Simmons	Bay City	989-686-2295	simmonsa14@michigan.gov
	Jason Gostiaux	Bay City	989-686-3645	gostiauxJ@michigan.gov
Lake Erie South of Port Huron to Ohio border	Sara Thomas	Waterford	734-718-0474	thomass35@michigan.gov
	John Buszkiewicz	Waterford	248-296-2498	buszkiewiczj@michigan.gov
	Cleyo Harris	Waterford	248-221-0328	harrisc9@michigan.gov

Baraga DNR Office
427 US 41 North
Baraga, MI 49908

Bay City DNR Office
3580 State Park Drive
Bay City, MI 48706

Cadillac DNR Office
8015 Mackinaw Trail
Cadillac, MI 49601

Escanaba DNR Office
6833 Hwy. 2, 41 & M-35
Gladstone, MI 49837

Gaylord DNR Office
1732 M-32 West
Gaylord, MI 49735

Newberry DNR Office
5666 State Highway M-123
Newberry, MI 49868

Plainwell DNR Office
621 N. 10th Street
Plainwell, MI 49080

Traverse City DNR Office
2122 South M-37
Traverse City, MI 49685

Waterford DNR Office
7806 Gale Road
Waterford, MI 48327

Click here to access the application to stock fish.