

An aerial photograph of a coastal park. On the left, a turquoise lake meets a sandy beach with white waves. A dirt path winds through a dense forest of green trees. In the upper right, a large building with a bright red roof sits on a grassy area. Another smaller red-roofed structure is visible further down the path. The sky is not visible, as the image is a top-down view.

# Parks And Recreation Division

2023-2027  
Strategic Plan



Michigan Department of Natural Resources



This plan will guide the division in carrying out its mission to "acquire, protect, and preserve the natural and cultural features of Michigan's unique resources, and to provide access to land- and water-based recreation and educational opportunities" over the upcoming five-year period.



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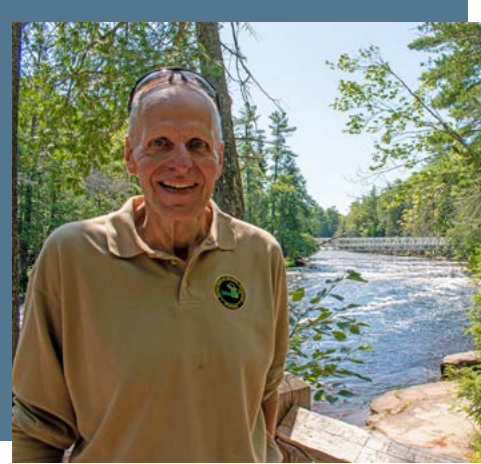
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Dear citizens,

Michigan’s state parks, trails and waterways are waiting for you to explore. These diverse resources play a defining role in residents’ quality of life and the future of this state.

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources Parks and Recreation Division has been protecting and preserving the state’s natural and cultural resources and providing access to land- and water-based recreation and education opportunities

for more than 100 years. Today, the division is responsible for operating and maintaining an extensive and diverse system of recreation resources statewide, including 103 state parks totaling more than 300,000 acres of public land, 140 state forest campgrounds, and the state’s motorized and nonmotorized trail and boating programs.

In Michigan, you are never more than a half-hour away from a state park, state forest campground or state trail system. The importance of these close-to-home recreation opportunities was highlighted through the COVID-19 pandemic when visits across the system increased by approximately 30%. While providing an important service to residents, this put an additional strain on resources and aging infrastructure. However, \$250 million in American Rescue Plan Act funds provides an unprecedented opportunity to strategically update infrastructure across the state park system, increasing efficiencies and responding to visitor’s needs.

The resources that form the backbone of the state park and recreation system belong to the citizens of the state. They provide opportunities to benefit physical and mental health, the economy and general community well-being and quality of life. Interactions with the natural and cultural environment foster an understanding and appreciation that will support resource protection to continue for future generations.

The DNR Parks and Recreation Division’s 2023-2027 Strategic Plan identifies goals and objectives to prioritize actions over the upcoming five-year period. The aim is to build a framework that will guide resource protection and the continuation of world-class recreation opportunities and lasting memories for current and future generations.

Thank you to all who continue to support our parks and recreation system through hard work, dedication and appreciation of the resources that are the foundation upon which the system is built.

  
Ronald A. Olson  
Chief, DNR Parks and Recreation Division



# Executive summary

**The Parks and Recreation Division Strategic Plan, 2023-2027** is the overarching document that will guide the division in carrying out its mission to “acquire, protect, and preserve the natural and cultural features of Michigan’s unique resources, and to provide access to land- and water-based recreation and educational opportunities” over the upcoming five-year period. This plan defines where resources should be focused for maximum benefit to carry state parks, trails and waterways into the future. The plan was developed with input from Parks and Recreation Division, other Department of Natural Resources division and state agency staff, our advisory groups and stakeholders, which include many community, recreation and environmental partners and members of the public.



## The engagement process identified the following six issues (in no priority order) to form the nucleus of this plan:

- Resource conservation and recreation.
- Environmental sustainability.
- Diversity, equity, inclusion and justice.
- Funding.
- Management and administration.
- Staffing.

Analysis of how to address these primary issues led to the development of five goals that the Parks and Recreation Division will work toward achieving. These goals are considered equally important; the numbers are for reference only.

**Goal 1:** Preserve, protect, maintain and restore Michigan’s natural and cultural resources on PRD-administered lands.

**Goal 2:** Foster appreciation for natural and cultural resources by providing inclusive and diverse recreation and education experiences.

**Goal 3:** Sustainably fund PRD programs, operations , maintenance and facilities.

**Goal 4:** Foster efficient business practices that support division priorities, staff retention and recruitment.

**Goal 5:** Integrate environmentally sustainable practices into PRD culture.

Each goal is broken down into a series of objectives that define how the goals will be met. On an annual basis, PRD will develop specific actions to implement the stated objectives. At the end of each calendar year, the division will report on the progress made in advancing the strategic plan goals and objectives. An integrated approach to implementation is critical, ensuring all DNR and state agencies’ staff, advisory groups, stakeholders and partners are informed and committed to furthering the success of PRD in years to come. PRD will also continue to work with local, federal and non-government partners to meet the needs of Michigan’s residents and visitors and to address resource stewardship on a system-wide basis.





## DNR mission statement

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources is committed to the conservation, protection, management, use and enjoyment of the state's natural and cultural resources for current and future generations.

## DNR evergreen goals

- Protect natural and cultural resources.
- Ensure sustainable recreation use and enjoyment.
- Enable strong natural resource-based economies.
- Foster effective business practices and good governance.
- Build and strengthen relationships and partnerships, internally and externally.

## PRD mission statement

The Parks and Recreation Division's mission is to acquire, protect and preserve the natural and cultural features of Michigan's unique resources, and to provide access to land- and water-based public recreation and educational opportunities.



# Quick Facts

**The Parks and Recreation Division of the DNR meets its mission by providing a system that includes:**

- 103 state parks, recreation areas, scenic sites and historic state parks.
- More than 13,750 state park campsites.
- More than 250 cabins, yurts, lodges and other overnight accommodations.
- 360,000 acres of land within state parks and recreation areas.
- 140 state forest campgrounds, totaling 2,647 campsites.
- 13,400 miles of state-designated motorized and nonmotorized trails.
- 630 miles of state-designated water trails.
- 19 state harbors on the Great Lakes and connecting waters.
- 636 transient slips and 236 seasonal slips at state harbor facilities.
- 1,092 DNR-administered boating access sites.
- 63 community harbors and 237 boating access sites supported by DNR Waterways funding.
- 7 visitor centers and the Michigan Iron Industry Museum.
- Special facilities including the Ralph A. MacMullan Conference Center, Outdoor Adventure Center and Holly Oaks ORV Park.

**This system contributes toward the state’s \$26.3 billion tourism industry by hosting (2021 figures):**

- More than 30 million state park day-use visits.
- More than 1.4 million state park camp nights annually.
- 24,483 harbor nights annually.
- More than 100 concession and vending contracts.
- More than 400 operating agreements for management or commercial use of state park facilities.

**Additionally, PRD protects the following natural and cultural resources:**

- 47,000 acres of dedicated natural areas.
- 263 different endangered, threatened or special-concern species.
- 344 occurrences of exemplary natural communities.
- Over 700 identified archaeological sites.
- 403 historic structures, including nine Great Lakes lighthouses.

**PRD works with numerous partners and volunteers to help accomplish its mission:**

- About 65 volunteer groups that have formal agreements with PRD.
- 112 active ORV and snowmobile trail sponsors (as of 2022).



## Issue statements

To develop a well-informed and supported strategic plan, a series of input workshops were held with staff and advisory groups to identify PRD’s strengths, challenges and opportunities (see Appendix C). From those workshops, six priority issues were identified. These issue statements are the nucleus of this strategic plan, from which all goals and objectives were derived. When annual action plans are executed, they will address and respond to these issues.

### Resource conservation and recreation

The Parks and Recreation Division is committed to its core mission of protecting Michigan’s unique natural and cultural resources, while providing long-lasting memories for visitors seeking outdoor recreation experiences. The division’s facilities continue to experience higher visitation, resulting in greater resource impacts and demands to expand traditional recreation endeavors as well as develop trending recreation opportunities to appeal to new visitors. These opportunities should be considered while recognizing the primary responsibility within statute to protect natural and cultural resources. As new recreation opportunities emerge, PRD is in a unique position to educate visitors and manage the resources responsibly. Forest health issues, such as emerald ash borer, oak wilt and hemlock wooly adelgid, and invasive species continue to threaten our state parks. The decline in prescribed fire as a management tool despite an increase in need also presents an ongoing challenge.

### Environmental sustainability

Environmental sustainability is about managing our lands in a way that ensures next generations can enjoy our natural resources the same as, if not better than, we do. The effects of climate change are a threat, and the DNR is committed to utilizing our lands to mitigate those effects. PRD lands include hundreds of thousands of acres of grasslands and forests that sequester significant amounts of carbon, protect water quality and play a major role in the conservation of biological diversity. As part of the State of Michigan’s initiative to combat climate change, PRD is working on installing renewable energy systems to reduce our carbon footprint and adding electric vehicle charging stations at state parks and marinas as these vehicles become more widely embraced. In addition, efforts are underway to upgrade PRD’s fleet with electric vehicles, to increase the use of electric equipment at our facilities and to continue to expand and promote waste reduction and recycling programs. Other environmental challenges exacerbated by climate change include invasive species, more extreme weather patterns and fluctuating water levels. These impacts will require thoughtful planning and innovative approaches to improve PRD’s resiliency.



**Diversity, equity, inclusion and justice**

PRD continues to be committed to fostering and promoting an environment focused on equity and inclusion to expand and broaden the diversity of our visitors and workforce. This is in alignment with the State of Michigan’s directive highlighting the need for state government to provide equal opportunities and protection for all citizens. Continued review of PRD’s operations and facilities will identify where improvements are required to ensure we are providing quality service to all visitors, regardless of their ability, background and location. PRD must also remain focused on efforts to diversify the workforce to accurately represent Michigan and our visitors. Continued efforts to attract and welcome diverse staff and visitors, and to engage with more diverse stakeholders and partners, will be key to ensuring equitable access to quality parks and recreation opportunities.

**Funding**

The Parks and Recreation Division has identified infrastructure needs of hundreds of millions of dollars within the state parks, waterways and trails systems that exceed available revenue and are indicative of the age of many of its facilities. Inadequate funding for our natural resources mission is also a continuing concern. The Building Michigan Together Plan, signed into law in March 2022, included \$250 million in federal relief program funding from the American Rescue Plan Act to help tackle the backlog of critical infrastructure needs in our state parks system. While this investment is expected to address a significant portion of the state parks’ infrastructure and some state trail needs, it does not address other identified financial needs to sustain state waterways facilities or natural resource stewardship. Also, inflation, material shortages and implementing many large projects in less than five years will be a challenge. Critical infrastructure projects that impact the health and safety of visitors must continue to be prioritized, while also considering opportunities for consolidation, repurposing, ease of maintenance and long-term sustainability. Data such as customer use records, recreation trends, climate change impacts, and regional supply and demand will need to be used to make sound decisions. Additionally, operational funding has not kept pace with inflation. Recent increases have made noncareer staff wages competitive and assisted with other operational expenses affected by inflation. Cost-of-living increases and ongoing inflationary costs will challenge us to continue offering the same level of services currently provided. PRD must review a variety of strategies to adequately fund effective maintenance of facilities, programs, and management of lands and resources sustainably into the future.



**Management and administration**

The Parks and Recreation Division is an organization with a clear mission that demonstrates collaboration, teamwork and dedication. However, challenges often include updating policies and procedures to meet changing needs, keeping pace with essential technology advances and responding to political and public pressures. Identifying ways to improve efficiencies through partnerships, data management such as a comprehensive asset management system, improved technology tools and sound business practices will lead to improved customer service and a stronger PRD. Management and administration play an important role in balancing expectations and staff satisfaction, which will continue to be addressed through employee engagement initiatives.

**Staffing**

Staff members are the foundation of the Parks and Recreation Division’s organization and will drive its future success. The pressure on employees has grown significantly over the past five years due to staffing shortages and increased use of PRD facilities brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. Visitation to PRD facilities increased nearly 30% between 2018 and 2021. Competitive wages, particularly to attract short-term workers, will remain a challenge as employers around the country deal with staffing shortages. PRD needs to continue to work toward greater efficiencies

in the hiring process to minimize vacancies, assess and address appropriate staffing levels, have position descriptions that adequately meet PRD’s needs, provide quality training opportunities, balance responsibilities, and ensure the division continues to recruit and retain motivated individuals who are committed to upholding its mission. This can be achieved by establishing career paths and seeking additional spending authorization to support staffing needs.





# Goals and objectives

PRD has identified the following goals and objectives to prioritize over the upcoming five-year period. Several other PRD plans will be worked on simultaneously. These include the Michigan DNR Trails Plan, green initiatives, employee engagement action plan, and diversity, equity and inclusion priorities (see Appendix A for a summary of these initiatives).

## Goal 1: Preserve, protect, maintain and restore Michigan’s natural and cultural resources on PRD-administered lands.

### Objectives:

- 1.1: Identify and prioritize high-value, sustainable outcomes for critical natural, cultural and historic resources.
- 1.2: Implement protection, preservation, maintenance and restoration to achieve natural and cultural resources conservation.
- 1.3: Create, update and align park natural resource stewardship plans as part of the general management plan process and complete NRSP for existing general management plans.
- 1.4: Determine the value of resource management efforts provided within the overall system.
- 1.5: Identify, prioritize and address land management issues such as trespass, easements, commercial use and similar items.
- 1.6 : Use agency and stakeholder partnerships to assist with implementing PRD’s mission.
- 1.7: Create a plan within the department to increase prescribed fire on PRD lands by targeting 15,000 acres of prescribed fire annually to restore and maintain natural communities, control invasives, improve recreation and aesthetics, and benefit biological diversity.

## Goal 2: Foster appreciation for natural and cultural resources by providing inclusive and diverse recreation and education experiences.

### Objectives:

- 2.1: Continue to provide and seek to improve quality visitor experiences so all feel welcome and safe from the very first visit.
- 2.2: Establish a data strategy for proactive analysis and decision-making on recreation, visitor trends and resource conservation.
- 2.3: Inspire an appreciation of “place” for our visitors.
- 2.4: Engage youth in experiences that foster an appreciation for the importance of natural, cultural and recreational resources.
- 2.5: Engage visitors in Michigan’s cultural heritage.

## Goal 3: Sustainably fund PRD programs, operations, maintenance and facilities.

### Objectives:

- 3.1: Evaluate existing and potential revenue sources to fund program needs.
- 3.2: Invest in capital projects to reduce the backlog of infrastructure in need of replacement or major repair.
- 3.3: Focus infrastructure development on long-lasting solutions that maximize efficiencies and minimize environmental impact.
- 3.4: Modify funding structures to better meet defined program, operations, maintenance and facility needs.

## Goal 4: Foster efficient business practices that support division priorities, staff retention and recruitment.

### Objectives:

- 4.1: Align policies, procedures and operations, and provide training as required.
- 4.2: Audit current technology resources and plan and budget for technology upgrades to meet staff needs.
- 4.3: Review both public-facing and internal information to ensure data is relevant, up to date and user-friendly.
- 4.4: Continue to grow new and expand existing partnerships.
- 4.5: Develop and implement a recruitment strategy.
- 4.6: Develop and implement an overall staff training plan.
- 4.7: Use existing PRD and relevant DNR plans to inform decisions and programs.

## Goal 5: Integrate environmentally sustainable practices into PRD culture.

### Objectives:

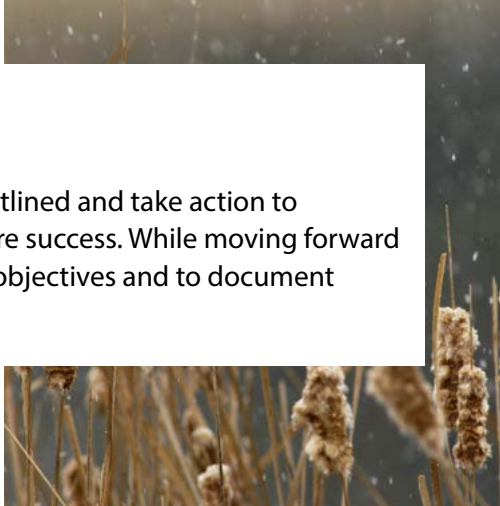
- 5.1 Recognize and plan for potential impacts of climate change at PRD-managed facilities in accordance with DNR climate adaptation and mitigation policy.
- 5.2 Implement recommendations from the Green Initiatives Team and best practices aimed at waste and energy reduction.
- 5.3 Educate and encourage PRD staff and visitors to participate in sustainable practices.
- 5.4 Pilot new sustainability initiatives at PRD facilities to keep up with emerging technologies, using metrics and data to determine agency value and broader use.





# Implementation plan

Implementation of this strategic plan will require all staff to commit to the priorities outlined and take action to accomplish the goals and objectives identified. Everyone plays an integral role to ensure success. While moving forward with this strategic plan, it is important to annually establish actions to accomplish the objectives and to document progress toward accomplishing the goals.



At the beginning of each calendar year PRD will establish annual actions to be accomplished within the designated year. This allows a degree of flexibility to adapt to unforeseen challenges and opportunities, while setting achievable milestones to measure progress. At the end of each year, the division will report on the status of satisfying the annual action plan and the strategic plan goals and objectives.

The success of PRD's strategic plan will be further strengthened through division partners and vested stakeholders. Engagement with stakeholders will need to occur throughout the department, ranging from the unit to the executive/legislative level. Communication will be critical to stay on track with annual action plans.

## Tools to document success:

- Use annual employee performance plans to set achievable individual objectives tied to plan implementation.
- Use existing, or develop new, reporting procedures in PRD sections to document strategic plan progress.
- Ensure that programming offered during the biannual PRD meeting is aligned with the strategic plan. Use this meeting as an opportunity to share success stories and to identify components of the strategic plan that need to be nurtured.
- Continue to share the strategic plan with advisory groups, stakeholders and community groups to assist in collaboration and understanding. Use the goals and objectives to guide decision-making with friends groups, etc.
- Use communication tools such as In the Loop and Chat With the Chiefs to report out on progress and highlight priorities.
- Use the annual action plan tracking spreadsheet to document strategic plan progress.



# Appendix A: Guiding resources

The following plans guide recreation and management decisions statewide and departmentwide and were used as a refence when developing this strategic plan to ensure alignment of priorities.

## Michigan State Parks and Outdoor Recreation Blue Ribbon Panel Report (2012)

The Blue Ribbon Panel’s report on state parks and outdoor recreation identifies a number of recommendations for systemwide changes to programs, management, infrastructure type and investment strategies that set up the visionary framework for the next 30-50 years of parks and outdoor recreation management in Michigan.

## Michigan Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (2023-2027)

SCORP is a five-year strategic plan that shapes investment by the state and local communities in priority outdoor recreation infrastructure and programming. The SCORP’s overarching goal is to “Ensure that Michigan’s outdoor recreation assets are equitably distributed, developed and managed to provide convenient and welcoming access to the outdoors for healthful, outdoor physical activity; drive broad-based economic and quality-of-life benefits to people and communities; while sustaining our lands, waters and wildlife for current and future generations.”

## DNR Public Land Strategy (2021-2026)

The DNR Public Land Strategy guides the department in its stewardship of the 4.6 million acres of public lands owned by the people of Michigan. The strategy’s three main purposes are demonstrating how responsible management of the state’s large public land base is important to the protection of our natural and cultural resources, setting priorities and guiding actions, and complying with Public Act 240 of 2018. The strategy identifies broad goals, with tactics for public land ownership, implementation and measurable objectives to track progress.

In addition, PRD has adopted other plans that deal with specific programs or initiatives. The goals and objectives in the following plans will be carried out in concert with the PRD Strategic Plan.



## Michigan DNR Trails Plan (2022-2032)

The DNR Trails Plan guides the direction of more than 13,400 miles of Michigan’s diverse trail opportunities and lays out key goals to ensure these valuable assets are sustained and remain relevant into the future. The plan’s four goals include: sustainable trail maintenance and development; funding; planning and collaboration; and marketing, promotion and education. Outcomes of the plan include quality trail experiences, public stewardship, and community and economic prosperity.

## PRD Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice Plan

A new DEIJ plan for the division is currently being drafted, to align with the DNR’s DEI mission and recommendations. The department’s DEI mission states that “The Michigan Department of Natural Resources will foster and promote an environment focused on inclusion and equity to expand and broaden the diversity of our beneficiaries and workforce.”

## Employee Engagement Action Plan (2021)

This plan focuses on areas that have a high impact on employee engagement, based on input from the statewide employee engagement survey and the 2021 DNR employee engagement pulse survey. Action items are outlined where a priority for improvement or need for enhancement was identified. Actions listed address internal communication, staff development, and staff support needs and opportunities.

## PRD Field Guide to Environmental Sustainability (2017-2022)

Parks and Recreation Division’s Green Initiatives Team was established in 2003 as the result of a partnership between the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and the Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy. The team supports the division’s efforts to become environmentally sustainable through conservation, pollution prevention, energy efficiency and education. PRD’s sustainability plan lays out three principals of sustainability and recommended implementation items. This plan will be updated in 2023.



# Appendix B: Timeline of significant events



## 1910s - 1920s

- Interlochen State Park was acquired in 1917 and became the first state park in 1919, when the Michigan Legislature established the Michigan State Parks Commission.
- The Department of Conservation was created in 1921. The park system was supported by the private sector in these early years, and P.J. Hoffmaster was named the first superintendent of the state parks in 1922.

## 1930s - 1940s

- The Civilian Conservation Corps created much of the infrastructure in our state parks.
- The National Park Service created recreational demonstration areas. Waterloo and Yankee Springs RDAs were turned over to the state in 1943.
- Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park was acquired in 1944. The Legislature also appropriated \$3 million for acquisition of "recreational areas" in southern Michigan, resulting in 10 new parks.
- The Michigan State Waterways Commission was established in 1947 to support the development of state sponsored harbors around the Great Lakes through a partnership with the federal government.



## 1950s - 1960s

- Public Act 149 of 1960 – The State Motor Vehicle Permit and Bond Authorization Law. This allowed implementation of a motor vehicle fee to enter state parks.
- In 1968, the Department of Natural Resources was created and assumed responsibility of the Michigan State Waterways Commission. The boating access site program was transferred to the purview of the Waterways Commission.



## 1970s - 1980s

- The Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund was created in 1976. This provided funding for land purchases and development for recreation.
- The Rails to Trails program began in Michigan after the DNR and Department of Transportation began purchasing abandoned railroad rights-of-way.

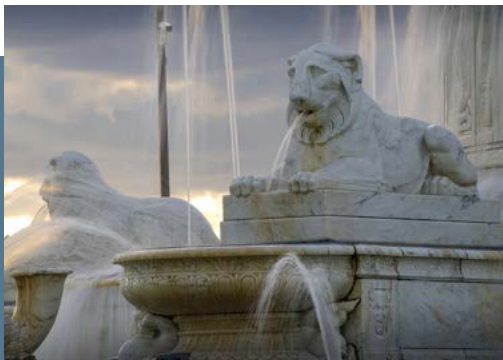


## 1990s - 2000s

- The parks and boating programs of the DNR merged in 1993 to form the Parks and Recreation Division.
- The Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act was established in 1994.
- Public Act 392 of 2004 established the Citizen's Committee for Michigan State Parks (now the Michigan State Parks Advisory Committee).
- The Michigan State Parks Endowment Fund was established in 1994 by a constitutional amendment to provide a stable, consistent source of funding for Michigan's state parks system.

## 2010s - present

- In 2010, the Recreation Passport replaced the state motor vehicle permit and added harbor, trail and boating access site entry.
- PRD responsibilities increased to include management of recreation on state forest lands, including 140 state forest campgrounds and thousands of miles of trails.
- PRD expanded outdoor recreation programming and outreach in Detroit when it began operating Belle Isle Park in 2014 and opened the Outdoor Adventure Center in 2015.
- PRD entered into several partnership agreements for new facilities, including Watkins Lake State Park and County Preserve with Washtenaw County; Holly Oaks ORV Park, operated by Oakland County; and Saginaw River Headwaters Rec Area, operated by Saginaw County Parks. A new state park is also being planned for Flint.
- In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic impacted PRD operations, with an abbreviated camping season and health protocols implemented to keep visitors safe. The pandemic also resulted in record-high attendance.
- The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, passed in response to the pandemic, designated a \$250 million investment in state park infrastructure to address a backlog of needs.





# Appendix C: Planning process and engagement

Planning for the PRD strategic plan update began in December 2022. A core planning team of PRD staff was established to guide the process, which began with a review of the PRD Strategic Plan 2017-2022: Connections. The team concluded that the main content of the plan was still relevant and that a complete rewrite would not be necessary. However, there was a desire to simplify and streamline the plan, as well as consider changes that have occurred over the last five years, such as the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, increased park attendance, renewable energy initiatives, climate change resiliency, and diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives.

The planning team followed a logical, step-by-step process to develop the strategic plan update, which included many opportunities for input from PRD staff, advisory groups and the public as outlined in the diagram below.

Staff and advisory group input was an integral part of the strategic plan development. Between January and April 2022, the strategic plan team held online Strengths, Challenges and Opportunities workshops. A total of 12 staff meetings were held, consisting of eight district meetings and four section meetings. For staff meetings, participants were asked to type in their responses using Google Jamboard, which enabled the team to identify and analyze repeating themes.

Strategic plan team members met online with the Michigan State Parks Advisory Committee and the Waterways Commission to conduct a SCO workshop using the same method as for staff. In addition, input was collected via a SCO survey sent to the Michigan Trails Advisory Council, all trails subcommittees and the Belle Isle Park Advisory Committee.

The information collected at these meetings was analyzed and categorized to determine recurring themes and to identify the key issues that this strategic plan should address. This resulted in the development of the six issue statements included in this plan.

The issue statements were then developed into five goals. These goals were refined, and five content teams made up of DNR staff with expertise corresponding to each goal identified objectives for each goal. The planning team compiled the goals and objectives and updated each section to reflect the changes that have occurred since the previous plan was approved.

In October/November 2022, the draft Parks and Recreation Division Strategic Plan 2023-2027 was made available to PRD staff and other DNR divisions for review. The comments received were collected, and revisions were made to the plan as appropriate.

The revised draft strategic plan was released to the public in January 2023 for a three-week comment period. A press release informing people of the opportunity to review and comment on the draft plan, which was posted on the department’s website, was sent to over 800,000 recipients. The release was also picked up by many media outlets. Over 150 individual comments were received. These comments were reviewed for relevancy to the Strategic Plan and some minor edits were made in response. Other comments presented ideas for evaluation as future action items, while some were referred to staff for information and consideration outside of this planning effort.

The final draft plan was presented to PRD Section Chiefs and Resource Management Bureau Chiefs for recommendation to approve, prior to approval by the DNR Director in March 2023.



# Appendix D: Legal authorities

## Parks

**PUBLIC ACT 218 OF 1919** - Created the Michigan State Park Commission to acquire lands for state parks.

**PUBLIC ACT 451 OF 1994, PART 741 - STATE PARK SYSTEM – NATURAL RESOURCE AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACT** - This act is the recodification of law that established the Michigan State Park System and defined the powers and duties of same.

- Section 324.74102 identifies the duties of the State Park System as follows:
  1. “The legislature finds:
    - a. Michigan State Parks preserve and protect Michigan’s significant natural and historic resources.
    - b. Michigan State Parks are appropriate and uniquely suited to provide opportunities to learn about protection and management of Michigan’s natural resources.
    - c. Michigan State Parks are an important component of Michigan’s tourism industry and vital to local economies.
  2. The department shall create, maintain, operate, promote, and make available for public use and enjoyment a system of state parks to preserve and protect Michigan’s significant natural resources and areas of natural beauty or historic significance, to provide open space for public recreation, and to provide an opportunity to understand Michigan’s natural resources and need to protect and manage those resources.”

**PUBLIC ACT 451 OF 1994, PART 831 - STATE FOREST RECREATION** - defines the scope of recreation on state forest land and establishes parameters for the use of the forest recreation account.

324.83102 Recreation within state forest; scope.

The department shall develop, operate, maintain, and promote an integrated recreation system that provides opportunities for hunting, fishing, camping, hiking, snowmobiling, off-road vehicle trail riding, boating, trail related activities, and other forms of recreation within each state forest. In developing, operating, maintaining, and promoting this recreation system, the department shall focus on maintaining the integrity of the forest while supporting recreation activities and experiences for which a large land base, rustic nature, and the forest and forest values are critical to the activity.





# Boating

**PUBLIC ACT 320 OF 1947 – HARBORS AND DOCKS PROGRAM** – Created the Michigan State Waterways Commission to take advantage of federal monies made available from the 1945 Rivers and Harbors Act which provided funding for U.S. Army Corps of Engineers projects on navigable waters of the nation. This established the Michigan “Harbor-of-Refuge System” with the objectives to develop harbors and docking facilities on the Great Lakes shoreline as required to provide for the safe boating enjoyment of these waters, and to encourage tourist-related economic development.

**PUBLIC ACT 79 OF 1988 – HARBOR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM** – This act provides for expanded seasonal and transient moorage through public-private development and private operation of facilities through long-term leasing of publicly owned properties.

**PUBLIC ACT 451 OF 1994, PART 781 – MICHIGAN STATE WATERWAYS COMMISSION** – This act is the recodification of law that established the Michigan State Waterways Commission and defined the powers and duties of same.

- Section 324.78105 identifies the powers and duties of the department, defined in part as follows:
  1. To acquire, construct, and maintain harbors, channels, and facilities for vessels in the navigable waters lying within the boundaries of the state of Michigan.
- Section 324.78110 defines the use of the Waterways account for only:
  1. Construction, operation, and maintenance of recreational boating facilities.
  2. Acquisition of property for the purposes of this part.
  3. For grants to local units of government and state colleges or universities to acquire and develop harbors of refuge and public boating access sites under section 78115.
  4. For the purposes provided in part 791.
- Section 324.78115 established the boating access grant program, defined in part:
  1. The department shall establish a public boating access sites grant program. The grant program shall provide funding with money in the waterways account to local units of government and public colleges or universities for all or a portion of the cost of either or both of the following:
    - a. The acquisition of land for the establishment of a public boating access site.
    - b. The cost of developing a public boating access site.

**PUBLIC ACT 451 OF 1994, PART 791 – HARBOR DEVELOPMENT** – This act is the recodification of law that established the Harbor Development program and defined the powers and duties of same.

