



Michigan Department of Natural Resources *2014 Snapshot of Accomplishments*

It was a busy, productive year as the department carried out its mission to protect and manage Michigan's world-class natural and cultural resources for current and future generations. Here are some of the highlights:

- Made progress in the fight to keep Asian carp species out of Michigan waters, including: the collaboration of federal, state and provincial agencies in Lake Erie and Illinois River field exercises; the signing of a Mutual Aid Agreement that directs participating agencies to share expertise and resources against serious invasive threats; and a rapid and targeted response to a single positive eDNA finding for silver carp in the Kalamazoo River. These actions set the stage for Gov. Snyder to unveil a new comprehensive plan to fight invasive species on the land and in the water in Michigan.

- Invested in conservation through a [new hunting and fishing license structure](#) so that Michigan's world-class natural resources are professionally managed in accordance with sound science. Additional revenue generated from the license restructuring goes directly toward conservation officers, biologists, habitat improvement and resource management – boots on the ground, waders in the water and eyes in the field. More than \$2.7 million in wildlife and aquatic habitat grants with partners already has been made possible from this revenue.



- Launched the statewide [GEMS \(Grouse Enhanced Management Systems\)](#) program: seven prime grouse and woodcock hunting locations that are marketed to all hunters. GEMS has benefited from a robust partnership approach that to date includes six outside natural resources organizations, the Ottawa National Forest and 24 local businesses.
- Partnered with constituent organizations to resolve long-standing concerns around the Golden Lotus Dam at Song of the Morning Ranch in Otsego County. The solution brought together conservation groups and regulatory agencies to improve one of Michigan's world-class natural resources assets, the Pigeon River, and set the stage for a broader river restoration.



- Strengthened protection of natural resources and Michigan's rural law enforcement network by adding to Michigan's ranks of [conservation officers](#). Michigan had 171 conservation officers before the most recent academy, which graduated in June. When the investment of the governor and Legislature is completed, Michigan will have 235 state conservation officers.

- Led a multistate response to the discovery of [White-nose syndrome](#) in Michigan’s bat population to engage the federal government on a thoughtful, deliberative approach to potential listing of the northern long-eared bat under the federal Endangered Species Act. Listing of the bat as endangered would have significant negative implications for forestry and other activities in Michigan while not necessarily addressing the root cause of the decline in the bat population. Michigan’s critical leadership on the issue helped delay a final decision on listing by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service until additional information was gathered and a broader discussion among states and partner agencies had occurred.
- Continued to make progress on goals identified at the spring 2013 Governor’s Forest Products Summit. The department’s efforts helped move the state’s forest products industry from \$14 billion to \$16 billion in annual sales, supporting 31,000 direct jobs and 78,000 indirect jobs in Michigan. The state increased harvest on Michigan’s 3.9 million acres of state-managed public forest land while safeguarding – through dual certification that ensures sustainable timber harvest – natural resources for future generations. In all, the department prepared 62,000 acres of timber sales on state-managed land for an estimated 926,000 cords of wood.



- Saw five new [state-record fish](#) caught in Michigan waters, a measure of excellence for the largest portfolio of freshwater fisheries in the world:
 - Flathead catfish (Barron Lake, Cass County, 52 pounds, 46.02 inches).
 - White perch (Muskegon Lake, Muskegon County, 1.93 pounds, 13.25 inches).
 - Brown bullhead (Alcona Pond, Alcona County, 3.77 pounds, 17.5 inches).
 - Black buffalo (Bear Lake, Muskegon County, 41.25 pounds, 38.25 inches).
 - Quillback carpsucker (Hardy Dam Pond, Newaygo County, 8.25 pounds, 23 inches).
- Expanded [Michigan’s world-class trails network](#) to secure our state’s reputation as the Trails State. This includes completing the State Trails Implementation Plan, increasing off-road vehicle riders’ access to trails via the approval of 11 new connector routes in the Upper Peninsula, developing a showcase trail stretching from Belle Isle to Ironwood, and shepherding through the Legislature the Pure Michigan Trail Bill package signed by Gov. Snyder.



- Aided in Detroit’s downtown renaissance by revitalizing [Belle Isle](#) – managing it as Michigan’s 102nd state park under lease agreement with the city of Detroit – and transforming the former Globe Building into the new Outdoor Adventure Center (set to open in 2015), providing greater opportunity for residents in southeastern Michigan to explore outdoor recreation adventures and natural resources-based careers.
- Provided employment opportunities and outdoor experiences for nearly 850 at-risk young people in Flint, Saginaw, Pontiac and Detroit by partnering with 15 nonprofit, youth-employment agencies through the state’s Summer Youth Employment Initiative.

Our state is well-known for its spectacular woods and waters, as well as for the countless opportunities available for citizens and visitors to enjoy a variety of uniquely Michigan outdoor recreation and cultural experiences. DNR staff and valued partners work hard to ensure these opportunities exist for current and future generations. Here are other ways we are making that happen, every day.

Managing and protecting natural and cultural resources

- Laid the groundwork for a partnership with the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, conservation districts and other partners to improve private non-industrial forest lands through the [Regional Conservation Partnership Program](#). This proposal requested \$10 million in federal funds over five years to promote early successional forests by providing private landowners with technical assistance, plan writing, forest stand improvement and invasive species control. It is expected to improve more than 160,000 acres per year.
- Stocked more than 22 million fish – weighing almost 398 total tons – including seven species of trout and salmon and one hybrid, plus seven cool-water species. These fish were stocked at 835 sites throughout Michigan via 431 trips covering more than 115,000 miles.
- After successfully administering in 2013 Michigan’s first limited wolf hunt for the purpose of managing chronic conflicts between wolves and humans while protecting the state’s well-established wolf population, the department undertook an update of the state’s Wolf Management Plan to incorporate new data.
- Successfully removed six dams in five counties throughout Michigan, opening up an additional 104 miles of rivers and streams for fish passage. These removals were concentrated in the southwest, west and northwest portions of the Lower Peninsula.
- Completed a variety of habitat improvements, including planting saplings along hunter walking trails, hinge-cutting trees to provide cover for snowshoe hare, and planting more than 5.4 million seedlings on 5,500-plus acres (including 1,500 acres of Kirtland’s warbler habitat).



- Created better wildlife habitat, controlled invasive species, reduced hazardous fuels and promoted forest regeneration by conducting 105 prescribed burns on 10,488 acres throughout the state – a significant increase over past years.
- Implemented a second round of [Dam Management Grant Program](#) funding to improve and restore Michigan streams. Two projects (totaling \$350,000) were funded, including one dam removal (Hubbardston) and one dam repair (Foch Lake Flooding).
- Tagged 126 lake sturgeon during routine assessment surveys in the St. Clair River system. In addition to external tags that are visible to anglers, 25 adult sturgeon received implanted acoustic transmitter tags as part of a collaborative study with the Great Lakes Fishery Commission, U.S. Geological Survey and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

- Engaged the next generation of conservation stewards by welcoming approximately 450 students – almost all fourth-graders in the central Upper Peninsula – to the Marquette Shipboard Education Program, through which the youngsters took a boat onto Lake Superior to learn about important environmental topics such as invasive species, macro-invertebrates and water quality.
- Successfully delisted White Lake in Muskegon County as an Area of Concern, after the area was identified in 1987 as heavily contaminated. Efforts included 16 DNR fisheries surveys that helped to develop and assess fisheries restoration plans. In addition, the department has stocked more than 2.7 million walleye in White Lake over the past 30 years, which also contributed to the delisting.
- Assessed continuing increases in the natural reproduction of lake trout in Lake Huron to where more than 50 percent of the harvest is now from natural reproduction. Additionally, higher numbers of Atlantic salmon have been reared and stocked in Lake Huron, showing promise of a more robust recreational fishery.
- Groomed 577,170 cumulative miles of snowmobile trails for the 2014 season by providing \$6.7 million in grants to 68 trail sponsor organizations that did the work. In the 2014 season, Michigan saw an 8 percent increase in snowmobile trail permits over the previous year, enhancing winter recreation and economic benefit for many Michigan communities.
- Worked with approximately 1,500 volunteers through the [Adopt-a-Forest program](#) to help keep forest land free of illegal trash and debris dumping. Volunteers cleaned up more than 911 cubic yards of trash from public land in 2014. That equals 304 truckloads of illegally dumped trash, of which 57 percent was recycled.
- Developed three additional [wildlife education programs](#) for fall 2014 – Understanding Threatened and Endangered Species, Waterfowl and Wetlands of Saginaw Bay and Bears in the Classroom – to engage thousands of Michigan children in the outdoors and encourage their stewardship of our state’s world-class natural resources.
- Preserved a significant source of Michigan history by acquiring the bulk of the remaining Detroit News material archives – including 2 million typed index cards that catalogue stories from 1873 to circa 2003. The Archives of Michigan will digitize, preserve and ultimately provide broad access to this material, creating a valuable and highly sought-after public research resource.
- Earned the Governor’s Award for Historic Preservation for completed renovation of the Ludington State Park beach house, enhancing one of Michigan’s widely used state parks.
- Continued the department’s [partnership with Eastern Michigan University](#) at the historic Mann House to provide a hands-on learning experience for graduate students in museum management and collection care.
- Partnered with numerous organizations to host the first-ever Michigan Inland Lakes Convention, hosted by the Michigan Inland Lakes Partnership. The event drew more than 400 people to address issues of common concern on Michigan inland lakes.



- Worked with 2,600 Project Learning Tree instructors to reach youngsters from preschool to 12th grade across the state. This environmental education program provides instruction and materials to promote interactive, hands-on learning.
- Made significant improvements to Belle Isle, Michigan's 102nd state park (after assuming management Feb. 10, 2014), working with a long list of partner organizations, opening the historic Scott Fountain, opening long-closed restrooms, repairing shelters and seeking to enhance the visitor experience. The DNR and partner state agencies spent nearly \$9 million on Belle Isle operations and road improvements. In addition, the DNR secured \$1.2 million in grants to revitalize the historic island park. The department is in the process of applying for an additional \$2.6 million in grants for future enhancement projects.

Providing and promoting world-class recreation opportunities

- Expanded opportunities for Michigan waterfowl hunters by implementing Michigan's first early teal-hunting season in nearly 50 years – an experimental season made possible by considered management of the state's growing teal population.
- Enhanced wetlands by completing critical improvements at Maple River State Game Area and Shiawassee River State Game Area. Improvements included pump-station replacements and construction, major repairs to miles of dikes, and other water-control structure replacements. These actions increased critical wetlands habitat and enhanced waterfowl hunting opportunities for Michigan residents.
- Improved the state's existing [ORV trails network](#) through increased miles of trails and better maintenance, a direct result of revenues from a new off-road vehicle license structure to better serve Michigan's growing community of ORV enthusiasts.
- Undertook statewide repair, upgrade and development work on 98 priority capital-outlay improvement projects at state parks and recreation facilities. The repairs total \$33.3 million and include everything from programming design to construction.



- Tapped into a growing interest in archery among youngsters by holding Michigan's first live [National Archery in the Schools Program](#) tournament at Central Michigan University in Mount Pleasant, welcoming 460 fourth- through 12th-graders.
- Strengthened partnership with Pure Michigan to better promote the state's venerable outdoors tradition and heritage – including hunting, fishing, skiing, camping, boating, trails and cultural resources.
- Provided Mackinac State Historic Parks history and natural science education outreach programs to 7,109 students in classroom visits across the state. MSHP education staff has connected with 212,261 Michigan students since the program started in 1989.
- Leveraged the Camping 101 program to introduce more people to camping – increasing the number of participants from 189 in 2013 to more than 500 during the 2014 season.

- Hosted more than 300,000 visitors at 10 Michigan state park visitor centers and fish hatcheries, including nearly 60,000 school children participating in education programs on topics from invasive species to dune ecology; taught more than 24,000 state park visitors basic angling and archery techniques in the Hook, Line and Sinker and Arrows Away programs; and collaborated with 250 Michigan schools and 16,600 students in the Salmon in the Classroom program.

Contributing to Michigan's growing economy



- Played a significant role in promoting Michigan's hunting economy, which contributes roughly \$2.3 billion to Michigan. Nearly 800,000 hunters bought more than 2 million licenses this year and brought their purchasing power – for equipment, gas, hotels, etc. – to local communities throughout the state.
- Recommended, through the [Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund](#), \$27.7 million in funding for 76 outdoor recreation development and acquisition projects.
- Sold more than 1.2 million fishing licenses to residents and out-of-state anglers who fished Michigan waters and contributed an overall annual value from sportfishing to Michigan's economy estimated at \$2.4 billion. These anglers are drawn by 154 different species of fish, more than 3,000 miles of Great Lakes shoreline, 11,000 inland lakes and tens of thousands of miles of rivers and streams.
- Contributed to local economies by partnering with sportfishing advocates to bring dozens of bass tournaments to Lake St. Clair (a top U.S. bass-fishing destination) during summer and fall 2014. The planned expansion of the Selfridge boating access site will provide additional space for hosting larger future tournaments. Additionally, Escanaba hosted the 2014 Toyota Bassmaster Angler of the Year Championship, which brought thousands of participants, spectators and volunteers – and hundreds of thousands of dollars locally – to the Upper Peninsula in September 2014.
- Leased mineral rights on more than 170,000 acres in two oil and gas lease auctions, the state's 240th and 241st such auctions since the late 1920s. The auctions, which provide for oil and gas development on public lands, raised \$3.3 million for expansion and improvement of public recreation opportunities in Michigan. The DNR managed over 12,000 active mineral leases that contributed roughly \$48 million in revenue last year to Michigan's economy, while continuing to balance above- and below-ground natural resource values. These revenues include distribution of roughly \$4 million for fisheries and wildlife habitat improvement.
- Contributed an estimated \$46.2 million in timber sale revenue to Michigan's economy through sustainable harvest on state-managed land.
- Achieved nearly 1 million camp night reservations at [Michigan's award-winning state parks](#), while welcoming more than 22 million visitors for daily recreation programs and park usage.

- Welcomed 1 million visitors to Mackinac State Historic Parks (Mackinac Island State Park, Michilimackinac State Park and Mill Creek State Park), and hosted 370,000 visitors at the Michigan Historical Museum in Lansing and the 10 field sites that make up the Michigan Historical Museum System.



- Partnered with the Michigan Sportsmen Against Hunger effort to collect nearly 30,000 pounds of venison that was then distributed to local food banks and community kitchens and, in turn, helped to provide more than 120,000 meals to Michigan families in need.

Anticipating and better serving customer needs

- Showcased Michigan's special places by partnering with Google and the Michigan Economic Development Corporation to add eight Michigan locations to Google Trek Street views. Among the sites featured by Google: Tahquamenon Falls State Park and Mackinac Island State Park.
- Implemented the state's new hunting and fishing license structure, which took effect March 2014. The new structure reduces Michigan's hunting and fishing licenses from 227 license types to just over 40, while investing in Michigan's unmatched natural resources.
- Reprogrammed the department's retail sales system to implement this simpler, fairer and more efficient hunting and fishing license structure.
- Successfully implemented a new [Central Reservation System](#) for camping and harbor sites in Michigan – that among other things allowed customers to view prospective camping sites through interactive maps – making it easier to book favorite spots via the Web and over the phone.
- Adapted to changing technology by implementing a first-of-its-kind text message system to help hunters with smartphones find the nearest deer check station through an interactive, GPS-enabled map.
- Launched a new stand-alone, mobile website (www.michigan.gov/mhc) for the Michigan Historical Center to provide better, broader access to visitors, researchers and educators.
- Constructed – in cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service and the Michigan Department of Transportation – two electronic Smokey Bear fire-danger signs in high-traffic areas. The signs are located near fire-prone regions on northbound U.S. 131 at the Cadillac rest area and northbound I-75 just across the Mackinac Bridge at the St. Ignace welcome center.
- Welcomed nine new members to the [Youth Conservation Council](#), which is working to engage young people in the outdoors, and launched a blog to share council members' outdoor recreation experiences and better connect with the public.

- Provided even easier access to more diverse recreation and fitness opportunities through programs like [Recreation 101/202](#) (150 programs statewide) and Fresh Air Fit, which works with fitness instructors and promotes Michigan’s trails and state parks as ideal destinations for improving physical and mental health.
- Launched a section of the DNR website dedicated to all things fly-fishing – both to encourage new anglers and to present new challenges for avid hook-and-line anglers. Michigan is a top fly-fishing destination in the country, an honor now highlighted at www.michigan.gov/howtofish.
- Leveraged social and new media for broader reach to and better conversation with existing and prospective customers. Year-end benchmarks include:
 - 879,589 individual subscribers to [DNR email news-delivery service](#)
 - 8,336,999 DNR website hits
 - 59,582 [DNR Facebook](#) “likes”
 - 21,375 followers of main [DNR Twitter](#) feed

