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GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
LANSING



DANIEL EICHINGER
DIRECTOR

SUBMITTED: February 16, 2021
RESUBMITTED: March 15, 2021

MEMORANDUM TO THE DIRECTOR

Information: Natural Resources Commission

Subject: Order to Consolidate and Standardize Watercraft Use Restrictions in the Pigeon River Country State Forest
Land Use Order of the Director Amendment No. 3 of 2021

Authority:

The Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, 1994 PA 451, as amended, authorizes the Director to issue orders to implement land use rules.

Discussion and Background:

Currently, the Land Use Orders of the Director regulate the type of watercraft that may be launched from DNR-managed land at seven unique sinkhole lakes located within the Pigeon River Country State Forest (PRCSF). These orders have helped reduce erosion and overuse at the waterbodies, while preserving high quality fisheries in the PRCSF by restricting the launch of motorized vessels. Erosion control work performed by the DNR and cooperative organizations has further stabilized sites, and some previous concerns have been alleviated over time.

Currently, these restrictions are located within three separate sections of the Land Use Order of the Director, in two different chapters. Chapter 4.34(9) prohibits the launching of motorized vessels on Hemlock, Ford, and West Lost Lakes. Also, Chapter 4.34(10) restricts the launch of any vessel other than inflatable float tubes on Section Four, Lost, North Twin and South Twin Lakes. At the time, these restrictions were needed due to the amount of erosion that had occurred from past swimming usage. Work performed by the DNR and conservation partners at these sites, has reduced erosion caused by accessing the lake. As a result, resource managers now recommend lifting the restrictions and standardizing the types of vessels allowed on the subject lakes within this Chapter. Thus, all non-motorized watercraft can now be used at all seven sinkhole waterbodies.

Separately, the State of Michigan acquired the north half of the area formerly known as the Blue Lakes Ranch over 30-years ago and similar protections were placed on North and South Blue Lakes to provide a walk-in remote fishing experience that aligned perfectly with the PRC Concept of Management. Chapter 7.4(1) prohibits the launch and use of motorized vessels within the Blue Lakes Ranch area. Within recent months, the State of Michigan acquired the remaining south half of the Blue Lakes Ranch area that contained Walled Lake. While the intent of the existing LUOD is to prohibit the launch of motorized vessels on all DNR-managed lands

within the Blue Lakes Ranch area, it is not clear that Walled Lake is also covered by this protection due to the outdated wording in this Chapter.

Over time, having protections for these ten PRCSF lakes located in different LUODs with slightly different restrictions has proven to be confusing. The purpose of this proposed amendment is to simplify, consolidate, and standardize the existing restrictions to alleviate this confusion. Additionally, this amendment will clarify that Walled Lake is subject to the established protections regarding these lake resources. Finally, while the option to use electric motors will be eliminated, the proposed amendment does remove the restriction that prohibits the use of any vessel other than float tubes on Section Four, Lost, North Twin, and South Twin Lakes. Now that erosion prevention measures have been completed, the elimination of the restriction will increase recreational opportunities by allowing the launch and use of canoes and kayaks on those lakes. The Department will continue to monitor erosion and modify as necessary in the future.

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Recommendation:

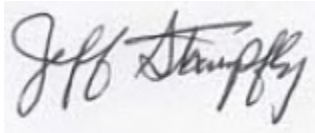
Relevant divisions have contributed to the preparation of this order. This was submitted for information on March 11, 2021 at the Natural Resources Commission meeting. This item appeared on the Department's March calendar and may be eligible for approval on April 15, 2021.



Jared Duquette, Chief
Wildlife Division



Gary Hagler, Chief
Law Enforcement Division



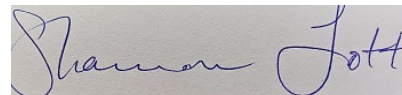
Jeff Stampfly, Chief
Forest Resources Division



Ronald A. Olson, Chief
Parks and Recreation Division



James Dexter, Chief
Fisheries Division



Shannon Lott
Natural Resources Deputy

I have analyzed and discussed these recommendations with staff and concur as to matters over which the Director has authority.



Daniel Eichinger, Director

Date: April 15, 2021

LAND USE ORDERS OF THE DIRECTOR

Amendment No. 3 of 2021

By authority conferred on the Director of the Department of Natural Resources by Section 504 of the Natural Resources Environmental Protection Act, 1994 PA 451, as amended, MCL 324.504, and in accordance with R 299.921 to R 299.933, the Director of the Department of Natural Resources orders the following:

4.34 Pigeon river country state forest. Cheboygan, Montmorency and Otsego counties defined; prohibited conduct.

Order 4.34 (9) Only carry-in, non-motorized watercraft may be launched from state-owned land onto any of the following described lakes:

- (a) Hemlock lake- T33N, R1W, sections 34 and 35, Cheboygan county.
- (b) Ford lake- T32N- R1W, section 8, Otsego county.
- (c) West lost lake- T32N, R1W, section 3, Otsego county.
- (d) Section four lake- T32N, R1W, section 4, Otsego county.
- (e) Lost lake- T32N, R1W, section 2 and 3, Otsego county.
- (f) North twin lake- T32N, R1W, section 10, Otsego county.
- (g) South twin lake- T32N, R1W, section 10, Otsego county.
- (h) North blue lake- T32N, R1E, section 19, Montmorency County
- (i) South blue lake- T32N, R1E, section 19, Montmorency County
- (j) Walled lake- T32N, R1E, section 19, Montmorency County

(10) This order does not apply to Department employees, designees of Department employees, law enforcement or other emergency personnel performing official duties.

This amended order shall be posted on or after the 16th day of April 2021.

Issued on this 15th day of April 2020.



Daniel Eichinger
Director