



Eastern Upper Peninsula Citizen Advisory Council DNR Division Reports

Date of Production: December 2019

This documentation is provided by Michigan DNR staff as supplemental information to the Eastern UPCAC members.

Public Meetings

- December 3 Wildlife Through Forestry–Bobcats & Snowshoe Hares, Ishpeming, 5:00pm
December 3 UP Sportsperson Coalition Meeting, DNR Marquette Office, 6:00pm
December 3 UP Sportsperson Coalition Meeting, DNR Crystal Falls Office, 6:00pm Central
December 5 Ask the DNR Show, WNMU–TV13, 8pm
December 7 Bear Forum, St. Ignace, 10:00am
December 10 UP Wildlife Habitat Workgroup, Ishpeming, 9:00am
December 10 UP Sportsperson Coalition Meeting, Gogebic–Ontonagon ISD, Bergland, 1:00pm
December 10 Eastern UP Citizens’ Advisory Council Meeting, Newberry, 6:00pm
December 11 UP Sportsperson Coalition Meeting, DNR Baraga Office, 4:00pm
December 12 Natural Resources Commission Meeting, Comstock Park
January 9 Natural Resources Commission Meeting, TBD
January 15 Western UP Citizens’ Advisory Council Meeting, Baraga Lakeside Inn, 5:30pm
January 15 UP Sportsperson Coalition Meeting, Great Lakes Sportsmen’s Club, Escanaba, 6:00pm
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U.P. State Park, State Sponsored & Other Area Notable Activities

- January 4 Muskallonge Lake State Park–Tahquamenon Country Sled Dog Race
January 4 Straits State Park–Stomp the Park
January 17 Van Riper State Park–Lantern Lit Snowshoe
January 25 Fayette Historic State Park–Lantern Lit Snowshoe, Hike or XC Ski
February 1 Tahquamenon Falls State Park–Guided Snowshoe Hike/Lantern Lit Snowshoe Trail
February 8 Tahquamenon Falls State Park–Guided Snowshoe Hike
February 14 UP 200 Sled Dog Races, Marquette
February 15 Tahquamenon Falls State Park–Guided Snowshoe Hike/Lantern Lit Snowshoe Trail
February 21 Van Riper State Park–Lantern Lit Snowshoe
February 22 Tahquamenon Falls State Park–Guided Snowshoe Hike/Lantern Lit Snowshoe Trail
February 29 Tahquamenon Falls State Park–Guided Snowshoe Hike/Lantern Lit Snowshoe Trail
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Recent DNR Press Releases

For full details, go to: <http://www.michigan.gov/dnrpressroom>

- DNR seeks candidates for Snowmobile Advisory Workgroup (11/27/19)
- Showcasing the DNR: That ‘one’ good Michigan hunting story (11/27/19)
- Holiday Gift Guide: Ideas for the outdoor adventurer on your list (11/25/19)
- CWD testing, urban forestry grants, #OptOutside and more (11/25/19)
- Bobcats and snowshoe hares in the spotlight at DNR ‘Wildlife Through Forestry’ forum (11/25/19)
- Michigan Bear Forum set for December 7 (11/21/19)

- Share your thoughts with the DNR at upcoming meetings (11/21/19)
- Showcasing the DNR: #OptOutside this Black Friday (11/21/19)
- Hunters help DNR meet CWD surveillance goals (11/20/19)
- Reporting tagged fish, baiting and feeding ban, Wetland Wonders Challenge (11/18/19)
- Michigan's firearm deer season drives tradition, economic gains (11/15/19)
- Michigan fights CWD with research, education and collaboration (11/14/19)
- Showcasing the DNR: Conservation officers helping curb the risk of wildlife disease (11/14/19)

Grant Contacts

For grant information, to go: <http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-153-58225---,00.html>

Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Grant	Merrie Carlock, 517-284-5931, carlockm@michigan.gov
Recreation Passport Grant	Merrie Carlock, 517-284-5931, carlockm@michigan.gov
Aquatic Habitat Grant	Kelly Parker, 517-284-5957, parkerk4@michigan.gov
Michigan Invasive Species Grant	Kammy Frayre, 517-284-5970, frayrek1@michigan.gov
Wildlife Habitat Grant	Kelly Parker, 517-284-5957, parkerk4@michigan.gov
U.P. Deer Habitat Improvement Partnership Grant	Bill Scullon, 906-563-9247, scullonh@michigan.gov

Western UPCAC Update

Western UP Citizen's Advisory Council Meeting – November 6 in Escanaba

- Proposed Marquette County Shooting Range Update
- UP Habitat Workgroup Update
- Current CWD Regulations Update
- Oak Wilt Status in the UP
- Drone Footage of Thompson Fish Hatchery Renovations
- Bear Season Update
- Deer Season Update
- Subcommittee Reports: Fisheries, Forestry, Trails/Rec/Law, Wildlife

The next WUPCAC meeting will be held January 15, 2020 in Baraga.

November NRC Meeting Summary – Ed Golder, Public Information Officer

The Natural Resources Commission met in Lansing on Thursday, November 7th. The Commission approved:

- Spring turkey regulations for the next three years. The commission amended the regulations to change the season opener from the Monday closest to April 20 to the second to last Saturday in April for all units. The regulations expand opportunities for hunters. Quotas increase for turkey management unit ZZ in the southern Lower Peninsula from 35,000 to 50,000. Last year's week-long hunts will expand to multiple week hunts. The new regulations will also allow turkey to be taken with a firearm from a scaffold, raised platform or tree.
- Statewide trout, salmon, whitefish, cisco, grayling and smelt regulations. The commission amended the regulations to reinstate a 10-brook trout daily bag limit on 33 streams in the Upper Peninsula. This higher bag limit had previously sunset on Oct. 1. The department opposed reinstating the higher limit on the 33 streams based on biological and social science.

Director Dan Eichinger approved three land transactions. Details can be found in the NRC agenda.

Michigan State Parks Advisory Committee

The committee approved a resolution supporting the Maybury State Park General Management Plan. The committee also approved a resolution supporting the establishment of hunting and trapping at Watkins Lake State Park and County

Preserve in Washtenaw County, approved by the NRC in September. The area open for hunting at Watkins Lake comprises about 400 acres of the park's total 1,122 acres. Hunting and trapping were part of the approved management plan for the park, which is jointly managed by the DNR and the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission.

Deb Jensen from Parks presented the Phase 2 Management Plan for Rifle River State Recreation Area.

Chuck Nelson from Michigan State University talked about a study he led assessing trends in Michigan State Park use and users. The three-year analysis was based on surveys of visitors and campers at 14 state parks throughout the state. About 2,700 people responded. Chuck concluded from this study that Michigan state parks visitors like the parks and have ideas for their improvement. In fact, the survey provided some ideas for improvement for the parks surveyed. The survey also showed that state parks provide substantial economic benefit to their local communities. Mean spending per camper at Traverse City State Park, for instance, was \$272, the high end of the parks surveyed.

Parks and Recreation Chief Ron Olson said Recreation Passport sales remains strong, as do lodging reservations. The Parks Division just hired 10 additional staff in the Western Upper Peninsula, many former Department of Corrections employees who were laid off from the Ojibway Correctional Facility when it closed. Funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency has helped with seven projects at state parks. Toilet and shower buildings were built to FEMA specifications to serve as storm shelters if they are needed.

Ron honored staff those who were instrumental in designing and executing the successful celebration of the Michigan State Parks Centennial: Maia Turek, Stephanie Yancer, Lyla Luoto and Michelle Coss of the Parks Division; Ami Van Antwerp, Tyler Czarnopis and Julie Ellsworth Byelich of the Marketing and Outreach Division; and Sarah Lapshan from the Public Information Office. The group developed creative and effective campaigns to engage the public and celebrate our award-winning parks.

Policy Committee on Wildlife and Fisheries

Todd Grischke of Fisheries said fall egg take has gone well. The number of fish returning to weir locations is down but the department has nevertheless been able to meet annual egg needs for Chinook and coho salmon, he said. Acting Wildlife Chief Rex Ainslie told the committee about the recent finding of a CWD-positive deer found in Hamilton Township in Gratiot County, a new area of CWD occurrence. The division recently announced nearly \$1 million in grants for wildlife habitat projects to be completed by Sept. 30, 2021. Recent results from a survey of West Nile virus in ruffed grouse in the Great Lakes region showed limited exposure in the birds and strong survival rates. Research in other states points to good grouse habitat as one factor that can produce birds in better condition that are better able to survive stressors like West Nile virus. For the third consecutive year, the department is conducting a disease management deer hunt in Alpena County to increase harvest and removal of TB-positive animals. The hunt runs from Jan. 2 through Jan. 5, 2020, and from Jan. 9 through Jan. 12, 2020.

Joseph Jandernoa of Parks, Randy Heinze of Wildlife and Richard Cardenas of the Law Enforcement Division told the committee about a proposal to change hunting areas at Yankee Spring State Recreation Area. The proposal would open about 350 acres of land around Chief Noonday Lake and Baker Lake to hunting. This land is currently closed to hunting. The proposal would close about four acres of land along the northwest corner of Long Lake to hunting that is currently open. The commission is expected to decide the issue at its December meeting.

Committee of the Whole

Parks Chief Ron Olson presented life-saving awards to several Parks and Recreation staff. In May, a man was mushroom hunting in the Fort Custer Recreation Area when he started feeling chest pains. Mandy Hills and Tony Trojanowski from the park helped the man and called an ambulance. Park staffers Gabe Feller and Walker Trucky met emergency personnel who hooked the man to an EKG machine and determined he was having a heart attack. The man was transferred to Borgess Hospital for treatment and has since recovered.

In July Dana Skytta of Holland State Park saw two people being swept out of the park's swim zone. Dana was able to put on a life jacket and intercept one of the struggling swimmers with a throw-line bag. The other swimmer made it to shore by himself. Dana took them to the beach to be checked by emergency services.

Law Division Chief Gary Hagler presented the Hunter Education Volunteer of the Year award to Dennis McMahan of Freeland. A retired Saginaw Township police sergeant, McMahan also served in the military police in Vietnam. He has

been a certified hunter education instructor for 50 years, actively recruits other instructors and never turns down an opportunity to volunteer.

Chief Hagler also recognized Harold Rich for more than 40 years of teaching Hunter Education classes. Harold began teaching hunter education in the early 1970s at Ionia High School. He feels every person who gives back to his or her community makes it a better place to live. Four other hunter safety instructors, although not present, were also honored for more than 40 years of teaching: Albert Creery of Jackson County; William Ehnis of Lenawee County; Dennis Schultz of Washtenaw County; and Robert Wagner of St. Joseph County.

Lori Burford of the Finance and Operations Division talked about a land use order to regulate target shooting at the Lapeer State Game Area. Renovations to the popular Lapeer Pit Shooting Area will start next month. Heavy use has expanded target shooting to other parts of the game area. The land use order would prohibit target shooting in locations beyond the established target shooting area. The purpose is to limit the impacts of target shooting such as debris, lead shot and conflict with neighbors and other users.

Director Eichinger offered clarification on the status of the baiting and feeding ban in the Lower Peninsula and in a portion of the Upper Peninsula. The ban remains in effect. Bills that would do away with the ban are in the Legislature, but the law has not changed. The department and administration continue to oppose the current legislation that would eliminate the ban.

A report on legislation affecting the department is below.

November 2019 Legislative Updates – Craig Brunet, Legislative & Legal Affairs Office

HB 4018 (H-2) – Revise Penalty for Illegal Taking of Sturgeon - Rep. Allor

This bill will amend the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act to increase the fine for the illegally taking of a sturgeon to \$5,000. The statute currently allows for a fine of between \$500 to \$2,000.

- This bill passed the House of Representatives on September 4, 2019 and has been referred to the Senate Committee on Natural Resources. The Senate Committee has held one hearing on the bill.
- The Administration supports this legislation.

HB 4313 (H-1) – Create a Pheasant Stamp – Rep. Howell

This bill amends the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection act by creating an annual pheasant hunting license. The annual license would cost \$25 and would require all hunters to also have the base hunting license. The Department shall use the money to acquire, restore or enhance lands to be managed for the benefit of pheasants, and to release pheasants on lands managed for the benefit of pheasants.

- The bill was referred to the House Committee on Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation. The House Committee has held one hearing on the bill.
- The Administration is neutral on this legislation.

HB 4332 – Allow Pneumatic Guns During Certain Seasons – Rep. LaFave

This bill amends the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act to provide the NRC the ability to allow an individual to use a pneumatic gun during any firearm season. The bill would also give the department the ability to determine whether a pneumatic gun could be allowed during archery season for individual with a disability or physical limitation.

- This bill was passed out of the House Committee on Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation and referred to the House Committee on Judiciary.
- The Administration is opposed to this legislation.

HB 4439 (H-3) – Allow Supplemental Feeding of Wildlife and Birds – Rep. Cole

This bill amends the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act to allow for the feeding of wildlife and birds if all of the following conditions are met: the feed is located within 300 feet from a residence; the quantity of feed placed, scattered, or distributed within 300 feet of that residence does not exceed two gallons; and the feed is contained, presented, or held in a manner to exclude deer and elk.

- The bill was passed out of the House Committee on Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation and referred to the House Committee on Ways and Means.
- The Administration is opposed to this legislation.

HBs 4735, 4736, 4737 – Prohibit Certain Activities with Information Obtained under Freedom of Information Act – Reps. VanSingel, Cherry, and Love

This legislation amends the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act by preventing an individual from using information listing the location of game obtained under the Freedom of Information Act to take game. The individual would be required to sign an affidavit stating that the data would not be used to take game or assist others in taking game.

- The bills were passed out of the House Committee on Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation and referred to the House Committee on Judiciary. The House Committee on Judiciary has held one hearing on the bill.
- The Administration supports this legislation.

HB 4589 – Eastern Wild Turkey as State Game Bird – Rep. Howell

The legislation would name the Eastern Wild Turkey as the state’s official game bird.

- The bill was passed out of the House Committee on Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation and referred to the House Committee on Ways and Means.
- The Administration has not taken a position on this legislation.

HB 4687 – Deer and Elk Feeding – Rep. Hoitenga

This bill seeks to amend the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act to allow an individual to engage in deer and elk feeding during the open seasons.

- This bill was passed the House of Representatives on November 5, 2019.
- The Administration is opposed to this legislation.

HB 5114 – Allow Hunter Pink – Rep. Hoitenga

This bill amends the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act to add the color hunter pink as an approved color to hunt during established daylight shooting hours from August 15 through April 30. "Hunter pink" means the highly visible color commonly referred to as hunter pink and includes bright pink, blaze pink, and fluorescent pink.

- The bill was referred to the House Committee on Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation.
- The Administration has not yet taken a position on this legislation.

HB 5115 – Clarify Eligibility for Obtaining Hunting License after Setting Aside Conviction – Rep. Eisen

This bill would allow an individual who has successfully had a firearm-related felony conviction set aside to not be ineligible for a license and is considered to not have been previously convicted for the purpose of obtaining a license. The bill is part of a three-bill package with House Bills 5020 and 5021, setting aside certain firearm-related felonies.

- The bill was referred to the House Committee on Judiciary.
- The Administration has not yet taken a position on this legislation.

HB 5132 – Allow Use of Trotlines or Juglines for the Taking of Nongame Fish and Snapping Turtles – Rep. Cole

This bill amends the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act to allow for the use of trotlines or juglines on inland lakes and rivers to take nongame fish and snapping turtles. Under the legislation, individuals using this method of take would not be allowed to: use live bait, set the lines within 600 feet of dam, or use more than 10 trotlines.

Additionally, individuals would be required to have contact information on the trotline or jugline, check all trotlines at least once each day, remove fish and animals caught in the lines, remove lines when not in use and ensure that juglines must be attended by or within sight of anglers at all times.

- The bill was referred to the House Committee on Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation.
- The Administration has not yet taken a position on this legislation.

If you would like to learn more about these and other bills, you can access the Michigan Legislature website at www.legislature.mi.gov.

Finance & Operations: Michelle Zellar, Eastern UP

- The Sault Ste. Marie office work is near completion with a scheduled move in date of December 10, 2019. Staff are happy and optimistic about the new location, office space and storage.
- The Customer Service Center has been busy with calls, license sales and deer check the month of November during the firearm deer season. We've seen many successful happy hunters.
- New Retail Sales System trainings continue to be scheduled throughout the state. Attached is the most recent license sale data presented at the last Natural Resources Commission meeting.

December

- 12/1 Late Archery Deer season opens (12/1 through 1/1) – no crossbows in the northern UP DMUs without a disability permit
- 12/1 Ruffed Grouse season re-opens (12/1 through 1/1)
- 12/1 Late pheasant hunt opens (12/1 through 1/1, see digest for open areas)
- 12/1 Bobcat trapping open in UP
- 12/1 Pike & Muskie spearing season opens
- 12/6 Muzzleloader Deer season opens in Zone 1 & 2 (through 12/15)
- 12/6 Muzzleloader Deer season opens in Zone 3 (through 12/22)
- 12/6 Fisher and Marten trapping open (see Fur Digest for areas)
- 12/10 Bobcat trapping open for Units C & D (closes 12/20)
- 12/14 Elk season #2 opens (through 12/22)
- 12/15 Fisher & Marten trapping close
- 12/23 Late Antlerless Firearm Deer season opens (through Jan. 1)
- 12/31 Bass seasons close (possession); Muskie (possession) closes in St. Clair/Detroit waters
- 12/31 Last day to apply for 2020 Pure Michigan Hunt

January

- 1/1 Can apply for Spring Turkey license
- 1/1 Bobcat hunting opens
- 1/1 Lake Trout & Splake open for N. Lake Huron and N. Lake Michigan – see p. 21 for limits
- 1/1 Late Season Pheasant closes (Zone 3), also close of late archery deer and grouse
- 1/6 Last day for deer checks
- 1/20 2020 Pure Michigan Hunt drawing results posted
- 1/31 Raccoon hunting season closes; also see Fur Harvester Digest

Parks & Recreation Division/Trails: Paul Gaberdiel, Eastern UP

Trail Reports

Rail-Trail Projects

- Engineering in process to replace 2 3' culverts on St. Ignace to Trout Lake Grade
- Haywire historical interpretive pull offs were constructed, Kiosks have been installed at the sites. Interpretive panels will be complete in December and placed after that.

Snowmobile Trail Updates

- Grant sponsors are beginning to work on brushing and signing for the season, many have completed the task.

ORV Trail Updates

- Bobbygay Road from M-123 to Dick Road has been changed to open for ORVs with a seasonal restriction.
- Working on submitting a project list for 2020
- ORV Seasonal Restriction DRAFT Land Use Order of the Director is being presented to various stake holders. MISORVA has responded with some modification recommendations.

Equestrian Trail Projects

- Little Brevort Lake Equestrian State Forest Campground Proposal has been approved and we are working on funding for Toilet, well and sight construction.

Pathway Projects

- Construction of a bridge at the mouth of the Blind Sucker River is in progress.
- Blind Sucker Pathway boardwalk replacement project is planned for next season.

Event/Use Permits

- Drummond Island Winter Jeep Event is in the process for co-management review.

General

- Constructed 7 pairs of bulletin boards to be placed at 7 ORV and Pathway trail heads.
- Tracking some multi-use trail projects in various stages from funding, engineering to construction.

Eastern UP Fisheries Division

Field Units (Cory Kovacs, Lake Superior Management Unit)

- Field staff completed netting surveys on area lakes for stocked trout evaluations. Lakes sampled were Ackerman Lake (Alger), Peanut Lake (Luce), and Perch Lake (Luce).
- Field staff also completed a maintenance project on the Andrus Lake fishing pier. Andrus Lake is located just northwest of Paradise and has largemouth bass and panfish populations.
- Field staff assisted with stocking retired brook trout broodstock from the Marquette State Fish Hatchery. Lakes stocked in the area include Cox Pond (Alger) and Youngs Lake (Luce). These fish are no longer needed in the hatchery for gamete production (eggs and sperm) so they are stocked into area lakes with approved management prescriptions.
- Fisheries managers have prepared and completed management prescriptions for waters with fish stocking requests and habitat needs. Upcoming projects in these management prescriptions include sediment trap closure, wild fish transfer, and a new stocking request.
- Fisheries managers are currently reviewing the draft for the upcoming 2020 Michigan Fishing Guide. Due to the challenges associated with making changes in the guide, it takes multiple detailed reviews to ensure accuracy.
- Fisheries managers are assisting with the development of the Waishkey River Watershed Management Plan. There will be a public open house on December 12th at 6:00pm at the Bay Mills Casino in Brimley. Here the public can learn about the goals and objectives detailed in the plan, while speaking with those who are developing the plan. A public questionnaire will be available for feedback regarding values and uses of the watershed.
- Fisheries managers are preparing for the upcoming Biologist Conference. This conference is a meeting for fisheries managers and biologists in Fisheries Division to discuss and make decisions on statewide issues. Some topics for this year's meeting include northern pike and walleye regulations, Division policy and procedure assessment, Great Lakes muskellunge program review, and lake habitat projects. Any regulation change recommendations then go to either the Warmwater or Coldwater Resources Steering Committees for their review.
- Production for Great Lakes muskellunge in 2019 was down a little from previous production years. A total of 12,478 fall fingerlings were stocked into nine waterbodies across the state. Waters receiving Great Lakes muskellunge this year were Big Island Lake (Schoolcraft) and Teal Lake (Marquette). Average length for fall fingerling muskellunge was 9.2 inches.
- As of November 22, a total of 15 muskellunge harvested thus far for 2019-20 fishing season. This is slightly ahead of the pace set in the 2018-19 fishing season.

State Fish Hatcheries (Jan VanAmberg, Hatchery Manager)

Thompson State Fish Hatchery

Fish Culture

- Mass marking of steelhead will be complete on Oct 8. Approximately 625,000 yearlings and 150,000 fall fingerlings clipped and tagged using USFWS auto trailer
- Stocking of fall fingerling steelhead starting week of October 7th.
- Experimented feeding steelhead fingerlings two types of EWOS (Brand) fish food (off-contract). The steelhead ate both types. Next step is to determine feasibility and cost for a feed study next season.

Maintenance

- Capital outlay project continues to struggle to stay on schedule. Recent rainy weather has hampered pouring of concrete for interior kettles and filling up some of the ponds with rainwater. Excavating contractor spending a lot of time and effort just dewatering the ponds with gas pumps. Dewatering system installation for under drains for the rearing ponds has begun. Underground plumbing for the coolwater building complete. Block walls for the coolwater building started. No construction started on steelhead improvements at the coldwater facility.
- Entrance road runoff ditch cleaned, and power washed on south side. Looks nice.
- Excavation and reshaping ground around spring pond building to keep surface run-off from entering spring.
- Exterior renovations on technician building started. New doors, roof and siding.
- Annual DOT inspections and complete service completed for fish planting units.

Marquette State Fish Hatchery

Fish Culture

- Culture crew has been helping Research unit with field work- Bays de Noc surveys, brook trout stream surveys etc.
- First egg-take for lake trout completed. Lake trout and brook trout egg takes will be on-going until mid-November.

Maintenance

- Sand trap in Cherry Creek dredged using Parks Division (PRD) equipment crew
- PRD equipment crew reshaped and rip-rapped spill ways to direct water off the pavement at the entrance to the hatchery.
- Annual DOT inspections and complete service completed for fish planting units.

Fish Marking and Fish Transport

Administration

- Process starting to permanently fill the Fish Stocking and Marking Biologist position.

Fish Marking

- Setting up purchase order for annual coded wire tag order; approximately 425,000 tags, \$41, 250. These tags will fill out our inventory needed for all tagging projects for FY2020.

Marquette Fisheries Research Station (Dr. Ed Baker & Dr. Troy Zorn)

- In early October, the Lake Char assisted hatchery staff with wild lake trout sampling and tissue sample collections from Lake Superior near Marquette for additional testing for EED virus.
- The Lake Char was surveying Buffalo Reef and Traverse Island Reef to capture lake trout and lake whitefish for acoustic tagging. The netting and tagging operation is targeting spawning fish and will likely continue into November.
- Nearshore Lake Michigan and Lake Superior survey work wrapped up in September. This was a particularly challenging year for sampling northern Lake Michigan with many days of south winds and barely manageable seas.
- Commercial lake whitefish data collection continued through October.
- PIT tag antenna site recon visits are ongoing for Whitefish and Cedar rivers. PIT tag antennas will be installed in spring 2020 to begin long-term monitoring for returns of lake sturgeon stocked from streamside rearing trailers.
- Stream electrofishing to review the fish populations in 5-coastal streams related to the coaster brook trout regulations evaluation project concluded October 25.
- Lake sturgeon in the rearing trailer at Bergland were all PIT tagged Oct 3 and were stocked Oct 10.

EUP Wildlife Division: Prepared by David Jentoft, Wildlife Biologist-Sault Ste. Marie

- **Sharp Tailed Grouse Season:** Sharp tailed grouse season ran from October 10-31st. It is a unique opportunity for the far eastern Upper Peninsula as it is the only place in Michigan where sharp tailed grouse can be hunted. There are no preliminary statistics to share at this time, although staff received several calls from hunters coming to the area seeking information as to where to hunt. Habitat for this grassland bird is primarily on private lands but through the Hunter Access Program (HAP) there was a total of over 5,000 acres across 31 parcels for hunters to access.
- **Bear Season:** Preliminary registration numbers for the 2019 bear hunting season was 244 for the Eastern Upper Peninsula. This is a slight increase compared to the 234 bear that were registered in 2018. Hunters coming into check stations commented on the abundant natural food sources, such as soft mast, which may have influenced behavior of bear in their hunting areas.

- **Upper Peninsula Deer Camp Survey:** Survey materials for the Upper Peninsula Deer Camp Survey were mailed to camp contacts on November 1st. Participants report on their deer sightings, harvest success and opinions during the 16-day long firearm deer season. This survey provides hunters and DNR staff with feedback on the status of the deer herd and hunting satisfaction soon after the season ends, with a report being compiled in mid-winter. In 2018, over 460 camps with approximately 1,900 hunters participated in the camp survey.
- **Firearm deer season and deer check stations:** Wildlife division staff have been working at deer check stations across the region, both locally on the east end of the Upper Peninsula and at other locations that need extra staff. Hunters have been reporting good deer numbers, including many hunters mentioning seeing multiple bucks, and generally seem to be happy with the season so far. Weather conditions have been generally satisfactory for hunting with a few exceptions. Some areas received high snowfall amounts that impacted hunting earlier in firearm season which prevented some hunters from not reaching their camp or planned hunting location. We have received reports that the deer in the north have already started to migrate out of those areas. In midseason, check station numbers during firearm season generally appeared like those of 2018, a better understanding of the trend will be had later in the season. Few samples have submitted for Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) testing, as most of the deer checked have been from outside the surveillance areas.
- **Habitat Management and other activities:** In late October staff attended a Three Shores CISMA partner meeting and gave an update on treating invasive species on the east side of the Upper Peninsula. Three Shore CISMA staff and wildlife division staff worked together this fall to treat invasive phragmites on the Blind Sucker Flooding and to treat invasive species on the Maxton Plains on Drummond Island. Pre-Inventory meetings have occurred, and wildlife division staff gave initial input on wildlife considerations for the coming year of entry forest compartments on state managed lands.

Law Enforcement Division (LED): Acting Lt. Jerry Fitzgibbon, Eastern District 2 Law Supervisor

- **Jerry Fitzgibbon**, Area Supervisor for the District continues filling in as the District Lt. for Lt. Hagy for an undetermined amount time due to a family member's personal illness. **Robert Freeborn**, Schoolcraft County Officer, will be filling in for Jerry Fitzgibbon during this time period as the Area Supervisor.
- **CO Reed** took a transfer effective Dec 1st to St. Clair County.
- Officers each received 12 hours of OT which was worked opening weekend of deer season. Officers were very busy with snow on the ground and many areas of the District closed to hunters by the depth of snow preventing access to roads and camps.
- Deer started migrating early providing good opportunity to those in their path and no opportunity to those poor hunters wishing the deer hadn't left.
- **COs Steve Butzin and Chris Lynch** were patrolling the Hiawatha National Forest when Delta County Central Dispatch put out a call of a serious ORV accident in Rock. COs Butzin and Lynch responded and were first on scene. The COs were informed that one subject had found an ORV flipped on top of another and that an individual was pinned in a ditch filled with water. The subject was unresponsive and had no pulse. The COs immediately began CPR and attached an AED to the subject. While performing CPR, the COs directed other first responders to the scene via radio. Due to the location where the ORV rider was, medical first responders were not able to get an ambulance to the location. The COs, who were assisted by the Delta County Sheriff Department loaded the subject in the back of the COs patrol truck to get the subject out of the woods. CO Lynch drove the patrol truck to a staged area of medical responders while CO Butzin and Sergeant Tom Lewis with the Delta County Sheriff Department continued CPR in the bed of the patrol truck. Once they reached the staging area, medical care was turned over to Rock EMS. The subject was later pronounced dead while on scene despite extensive life saving measures.
- **COs Steve Butzin, Chris Lynch, and Breana Reed** responded to a call of a lost child in the City of Escanaba. The young child had left school upset and given the cold weather that day, all involved knew that the child had to be located soon. Along with the COs, the search party consisted of the Delta County Search and Rescue, Escanaba Public Safety, Delta County Sheriff's Office, Michigan State Police, and local volunteer firemen. Thankfully, after over a five hour search the child was safely located and transported to family.
- **CO Colton Gelinis** was working a shining patrol in Mackinac County when he observed a truck using a green tinted spotlight to shine fields. CO Gelinis contacted the subjects who believed that they were legal to shine during the month of November. CO Gelinis advised the subjects that from Nov 1- Nov 30 shining is not allowed. CO Gelinis also advised the subjects that shining when legal must stop at 11 pm – 6 am. CO Gelinis issued a citation for using an artificial light between Nov 1- Nov 30.
- **CO Cole VanOosten** was on patrol when a call of a suicidal teen was reported near his location. CO VanOosten began searching for the individual and located the vehicle that the teen was reported driving. The suspect was not in the vehicle, but the engine

was still warm, and the door was slightly cracked. CO VanOosten began looking for the teen on a trail near the vehicle. With the help of the Luce County Sheriff department, the teen was located and brought in for medical attention without incident.

- **CO Cole VanOosten** was on patrol when he received a request to notify an individual at a remote cabin that a family member had passed away. The family was unable to reach the individual because of lack of cell phone service. CO VanOosten responded to the location and notified the individual of the circumstances.
- **CO Mark Zitnik** responded to a complaint on opening day of rifle season of a hunter operating an ORV around a Forest Service gate. Just prior to arriving to the complaint, he located a truck that was parked in front of another Forest service gate with tracks going through the gate. The CO found that the lock on the gate had been cut and the hunter was driving behind the gate to bait his blind. On foot the CO located the hunter who was not wearing hunter orange. The hunter explained that the gate had been unlocked, so he would drive his truck through the gate to bait. He would place his truck on the road and close the gate so no one else would bother him. The hunter was issued a citation for no hunter orange and two verbal warnings for operating behind the gate and blocking the road.
- **Cpl. Mike Hammill and CO Mark Zitnik** were working a complaint in Stonington that Cpl. Hammill received several weeks prior. A Wisconsin man has been coming up for the last 10 years hunting and shooting several deer a year without a license. Once at the camp, Cpl. Hammill went on foot to locate the hunter and CO Zitnik went into the cabin to speak with the girlfriend. Several minutes later, Cpl. Hammill located the rifle hunter without a license and obtained a full confession to shooting a six-point buck with his crossbow and putting his girlfriend's tag on it. When Cpl. Hammill and the hunter returned to the cabin, CO Zitnik located the meat from the six-point buck in their freezer. When asked to look further into the freezer, CO Zitnik found a vacuumed sealed package of hotdogs that looked to be venison. The COs question the couple on the package and stated when he sends the package to the lab, they will be able to tell what it was and what happened. The CO received a confession that the package of hotdogs belonged to a doe the hunter had shot the year prior without a license. The rifle, crossbow, meat, and package of hotdogs were seized, and a report is being sent to the Delta County prosecutor's office.
- **CO Steve Butzin** was following up on a complaint when Delta County Central Dispatch put out a call of a serious two car accident not far from his location. CO Butzin responded to the location and was met by medical first responders, Michigan State Police, and Hannahville Officers. While medical first responders were tending to the occupants in the two vehicles, CO Butzin assisted in providing GPS coordinates and helping clear a landing zone on the highway for one occupant to be transported to the hospital via helicopter. The incident is being investigated by the Michigan State Police.
- **CO Mike Evink and Acting Sgt. Robert Freeborn** were driving along M-28 when they noticed three snowmobiles facing traffic on the shoulder of M-28. All three of the snowmobiles failed to purchase trail permits and one was not registered. Additionally, the sleds were operating along a state highway against the flow of traffic. A citation was issued for no trail permit.
- **CO Chris Lynch** was on patrol when a call came out for a vehicle that rolled over and the driver was trapped inside. CO Lynch was the first on scene to the accident. The truck was tipped on its passenger side with the driver still strapped into the driver's seat. The driver had severe head bleeding and neck and back pain. CO Lynch called for a helicopter to transport the subject to a hospital and for the jaws of life. CO Lynch rendered aid to the subject's head to control the bleeding and then reached through the front wind shield of the truck to hold c-spine to prevent further spinal injury. The subject had to be held for over 30 minutes while emergency personal used the jaws of life to extract the subject from the vehicle. The subject was eventually successfully removed from the vehicle and air lifted to the hospital. The subject sustained a fractured vertebra in his neck and suffered lacerations to his head from the crash. Medical personal later stated if it weren't for the driver being properly stabilized while trapped in the vehicle, he likely would be paralyzed.
- **COs Chris Lynch and Acting Sgt. Rob Freeborn** patrolled the opening day of the firearm deer season. The COs issued 10 citations and gave several warnings for the following violations: exceed 2 gallons of bait, no hunters orange, no license, litter, operate ORV closed area, ORV trespass, operate ORV through a brook, no helmet, block access to public land, fail to immediate tag deer, operate motor vehicle no license, operate ORV between 2 PM and 5PM, and fail to license ORV.
- **COs Andrea Dani and Mark Zitnik** approached a vehicle along a 2-track in a known hunting location. During the investigation the COs noticed blood on the tailgate of the pickup that lead to a deer blind. After following the blood and interviewing all parties involved it was determined that 2 of the hunters used another's tag including a subject that had been deceased 2 weeks prior. Citations were issued both hunters for using tags of another. Officers warned the subjects about immediately tagging their deer with their own kill tag upon taking possession of the deer, having their kill tags in their possession while hunting, and warned the first female subject about forgery laws.
- **COs Justin Vinson and Cole VanOosten** checked on a local buck pole where they found two suspicious deer with tags bought later that same day. By using time of death calculations, they determined that both the deer were likely killed much earlier than the tags were purchased. The officers contacted the individuals involved and interviewed them about the deer. Both subjects admitted to shooting the deer before they had purchased their deer license. One of the bucks was shot at 6:05am, nearly an hour before legal shooting hours. The other deer was shot prior to the subject purchasing a valid hunting license. Reports were completed on both deer and awaiting review from the Luce County Prosecutor.
- **CO Colton Gelinas** received a call from CO Katie Stawara in reference to an illegal deer killed in Shiawassee County, however, the suspect resided in Mackinac County. CO Gelinas contacted the suspect who stated that he shot a big six point in

Shiawassee. When confronted about buying a license after killing the deer, the suspect confessed. CO Gelinas advised CO Stawara of the confession and charges are being sought in Shiawassee County.

- **CO Mike Olesen and Cpl Kevin Postma** contacted multiple hunters and hunting camps around the Hiawatha National Forest in Chippewa County. During the patrol, officers responded to a call of a deer being shot on private property. Upon arrival it was discovered that an individual had been road hunting, shot a deer on private property. An investigation and interviews were performed, and it was determined that the deer was taken illegally. Officers seized the deer and the rifle used by the suspect and a report is being submitted to the Chippewa County Prosecutor for review.

Forest Resources Division: Keith Magnusson, Acting Eastern UP Supervisor

- The 2021 Year of Entry (YOE) inventory has been completed. Staff is now starting work on the 2022 YOE inventory. Open House and Compartment Review information is posted online, along with other state forest inventory information at: Michigan.gov/ForestInput.
- Foresters in the EUP have completed setting up 13,138 acres of timber for the 2019 YOE. Timber demand has been fair to low. Stumpage prices received have been softening over the last year. This is especially true for lowland timber sales. Therefore, the department has reacted by offering loggers free one-year extensions on several timber lowland sales that have been impacted by this market change in order to allow loggers more time to harvest sales.
- As of November 26th, 206 timber sale contracts are open EUP Wide. This represents 520,825 cords of timber on 34,768 acres, valued at approximately \$24.8 million. Included in this are 5 GNA sales representing 22,608 cords of timber on 1,708 acres, valued at approximately \$1.1 million.
- Forest cultivation work EUP completed at the time of this report are 1,110 acres of contract scarification completed by Holli Forest Products, 35 acres of scarification completed by unit staff, 610 acres of trenching that will be planted in 2020 or 2021, and 136 acres of release and site preparation spraying completed.
- Preparations for the upcoming Snowmobiling season is in full swing. FRD Staff have been working with PRD and Snowmobile clubs to ensure safety as well as assisting with operational issues. For more information on the Snowmobile trail system Visit: Michigan.gov/Snowmobiling.
- Forest fire staff are busy winterizing and repairing equipment and preparing for the upcoming years activity.
- Fire activity this past year was quite low in the UP. Forest protection staff responded to 48 fires in the UP this year totaling 134 acres. There was good work done in terms of prescribed burning. There were 10 Prescribed Burns conducted this past year totaling 1,454 acres for the benefit of wildlife habitat and site preparations for planting operations.
- The Department continues to work on the Forest Action Plan (FAP). The FAP is a comprehensive, coordinated plan to help prioritize and direct federal grant funds and leverage state and partner resources to conserve, manage, address threats and enhance the benefits provided by Michigan's forest resources. The plan is implemented through five federal cooperative programs using federal grants: Forest Stewardship, Urban and Community Forestry, Forest Health, Forest Legacy and Community Wildfire Protection based on priorities in the Forest Action Plan. You can learn more about these programs at: Michigan.Gov/Forestry.
- Road and bridge projects are being completed across the EUP include: portable bridge setup for timber operations north of Brevort; Work with MDOT on realignment of US-2 near the Cut River bridge; an "Emergency" bride repair project on the charcoal grade road snowmobile trail linking Newberry with the Tahquamenon Falls and Paradise; and grading and gravelling completed on various roads across the EUP.
- The forest health program staff report:
 - Oak wilt is present in western Menominee county, the vicinity of Iron Mountain in Dickinson county, and in southeast Iron county as well as the lower peninsula. Forest Resources Division staff treat pockets of oak wilt infection on state lands every fall in order to protect the oak resource, however untreated pockets of oak wilt

infection on private and public land present a risk to any oak stands in the EUP through movement of firewood from infected trees in other areas of the state. Check the online oak wilt viewer for current confirmed oak wilt locations and to report possible infections at: Michigan.gov/foresthealth.

- Forest health staff are surveying for Heterobasidion root disease (HRD) in managed red pine plantations with pockets of dead trees. This disease, which is most easily detected in the fall, is slow moving, but kills conifers and is extremely difficult to eradicate once established. In the U.P. only one stand, located in Luce county, is known to be infected.
- Although Hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA) has never been detected in the U.P., it is established in 4 counties of SW Michigan. Due to an elevated risk of infestation along the northern Lake Michigan shoreline, DNR forest health staff are coordinating with local cooperative invasive species management area (CISMA) staff to survey hemlock for this pest on high-risk private and public lands within 5-20 miles of the lake Michigan shoreline this winter and coming spring.
- Staff Training
 - FRD staff will be attending Profession Development Training in February of 2020. This training offers several relevant classes to staff to keep the abreast of new issues facing the department, technology changes and a chance to build face to face relationships with fellow division employees.
 - Certain staff also attended L-380 Fireline Leadership; S-270 Air Operations; Society of American Foresters National Convention; Commercial Driver’s License truck driving school.
 - Fire-fighting fitness testing will be conducted in December. This annual testing is necessary to earn qualifications to be actively involved in fighting forest fires.
- Vacancies: EUP District Supervisor, EUP Planning and Inventory Specialist, GNA Forester – Newberry, Forester – Naubinway, Forest Technician – Shingleton. The process is underway to permanently fill these positions.

Marketing & Outreach Division: Jon Spieles, Statewide Interpretive Manager

- MOD completed Salmon in the Classroom Workshops at four locations this year in November (Wolf Lake State Fish Hatchery in Mattawan near Kalamazoo, Platte River State Fish Hatchery in Beulah, and at the Mt. Clemmons in SE Michigan). New teachers accepted into the program (application period ends April 1) must attend a workshop to obtain their permit, which gives them legal permission to carry the chinook salmon eggs and to raise them until release in May. More than 70 new teachers and sponsors attended these trainings. All 300+ active SITC programs have eggs that are now beginning to show eyes.
- MOD is hosting our second “Nature Center Summit”. The nature center summit is an opportunity for our nonformal education partners to learn, question and discuss Michigan’s changing natural resources base. This day-long workshop will feature the DNR professionals that research and manage these resources for the citizens of our state. We have pulled together the DNR experts on each topic, so you will be hearing the most current, science-based information available. Nature centers, zoos and camps, and other nonformal education settings reach thousands of Michigan citizens with programming and messaging about Great Lakes ecosystems, Michigan wildlife, and forest resources. College faculty also reach thousands of students in higher education. The event this year is on Friday, February 14th. A Nature Center Summit Flyer and registration form can be found at DNR/education. Registration is limited. For more information contact Jon Spieles (spielesj@michigan.com).

John Pepin, Deputy Public Information Officer – Marquette

- As some of you may know, the DNR has a U.P. Twitter Feed. As the administrator for this avenue of communication with the public, I want it to be the best it can be. To accomplish that I would like contributions, whether interesting facts, short videos, photos or important information to be included from DNR staffers across the Upper Peninsula. Please send me anything you might find interesting to share with the more than 7,000 subscribers on this feed. I would welcome this information regularly. I know there are great things happening out there and it would wonderful to share some of this with the public. Please send me contributions at pepinj@michigan.gov.
- I am also interested in good ideas for Showcasing the DNR stories for 2020. We have had some great stories this year, with new writers lending their talents to the effort. The stories have been published in newspapers, and

elsewhere statewide. Writers get byline credit for their stories. To volunteer to write a story or offer a story idea, please send me an email at pepinj@michigan.gov.

- Upcoming broadcasts of “Ask the DNR” for the 2019-2020 season include Dec. 5, April 9 and May 21.
- If there is anything I can help you with regarding communications, interviews, photos, et cetera, please let me know

Parks & Recreation Division/Trails: Paul Gaberdiel, Eastern UP

Trail Reports

Rail-Trail Projects

- Engineering in process to replace 2 3’ culverts on St. Ignace to Trout Lake Grade
- Haywire historical interpretive pull offs were constructed, Kiosks have been installed at the sites. Interpretive panels will be complete in December and placed after that.

Snowmobile Trail Updates

- Grant sponsors are beginning to work on brushing and signing for the season, many have completed the task.

ORV Trail Updates

- Bobbygay Road from M-123 to Dick Road has been changed to open for ORVs with a seasonal restriction.
- Working on submitting a project list for 2020
- ORV Seasonal Restriction DRAFT Land Use Order of the Director is being presented to various stake holders. MISORVA has responded with some modification recommendations.

Equestrian Trail Projects

- Little Brevort Lake Equestrian State Forest Campground Proposal has been approved and we are working on funding for Toilet, well and sight construction.

Pathway Projects

- Construction of a bridge at the mouth of the Blind Sucker River is in progress.
- Blind Sucker Pathway boardwalk replacement project is planned for next season.

Event/Use Permits

- Drummond Island Winter Jeep Event is in the process for co-management review.

General

- Constructed 7 pairs of bulletin boards to be placed at 7 ORV and Pathway trail heads.
- Tracking some multi-use trail projects in various stages from funding, engineering to construction.