



STATE FOREST LAND RESOURCE ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES PROCEDURE CHECKLIST

Issued by authority of Part 525, PA 451 of 1994, as amended.

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) conducts a wide variety of activities on State Forest lands, from activities taken to modify the composition or structure of a forest stand (called forest treatments) to road and bridge construction projects, mineral leasing and development, or recreational facility improvement. Every time the Michigan DNR plans to conduct these kinds of activities on State Forest lands, it must go through a process that assesses how those proposed activities will impact the land. Members of the public and Michigan DNR staff who are interested in when, where and why these activities take place can learn detailed information about the particular process and where to get related information through Information Circular 4200 (IC4200).

The Michigan DNR staff should consult the following general procedure and checklist as a guide when proposing and initiating activities. Resource assessments for timber sale harvests and wildlife management activity are routinely included as part of the Michigan DNR compartment review process. Many other types of activities have unique procedures that Michigan DNR staff must follow.

General Procedure:

The following actions are conducted by the Michigan DNR to assess potential resource affects and document activities and observations. These actions apply to all proposed activities on **certified** State Forest land, with the exception of routine maintenance of roads and bridges and other facilities. Although most forest treatments go through a compartment review, some have an alternate process which is defined either by statute or by a special Michigan DNR Procedure.

Planning Checklist:

1. Check to make sure the proposed treatment fits within the goals and objectives of Michigan DNR management plans and guidance documents. Be sure to determine if a Special Conservation Area exists in the Geographic Decision Support Environment (GDSE).

Plans may include:

- Compartment review decisions (including pre-inventory meeting objectives)
- Wildlife Action Plan
- Off-Road Vehicle Plan
- Eco-Regional State Forest Management Plans
- Statewide Forest Management Plan
- Special Conservation Area plans
- Other local plans

Guidelines may include:

- Sustainable Soil and Water Quality Practices on Forest Land
- Forest certification work instructions
- Michigan DNR silvicultural guidelines
- Within-Stand Retention Guidelines (IC4110)
- Green-up guidelines (IC4371)
- "Michigan DNR Approach to the Protection of Rare Species" Guidance document (IC4172)

2. Check the Michigan Natural Features Inventory (MNFI) database for rare species. (Remember, if this database does not indicate an element occurrence, it may only mean that no rare species have been documented to date. It does not necessarily mean there are no rare species present in the area.)

Use the “Michigan DNR Approach to the Protection of Rare Species” Guidance document (IC4172) for determining whether rare species are present. In summary:

- Check the Michigan Natural Features Inventory (MNFI) database for potential areas of concern, but also consider potential habitat, local knowledge, and references. – (see Documentation Checklist in Guidance Document)
 - Review listed species biology and habitat needs
 - Determine if there are potential impacts to rare species.
 - Request technical assistance as needed.
 - Review any concerns with the Michigan DNR’s Endangered Species Coordinator as needed.
 - Request special surveys where staff has determined there is a high likelihood of finding a rare species within a proposed treatment area. – Utilize process for requesting a Rare Species Survey in Guidance document (IC4172).
3. Check with the Department of History, Arts, and Libraries (HAL) to determine the significance of cultural resources that may exist within the proposed activities area.
- Notify the Office of the State Archaeologist (OSA) when compartment review plans have been developed for a given year-of-entry so that HAL staff can review and provide comments prior to the compartment review.
 - For all compartment reviews and reviews of potential soil-disturbing activities, check the HAL CONCERNS database. HAL CONCERNS shows sections within each township that contain archaeological sites. If there are hits, consult HAL’s OSA. (Remember, if this database does not indicate a concern, it may only mean that no cultural resources have been documented to date. It does not necessarily mean there are no cultural resources present.)
 - Forward staff reports of cultural features to OSA using form PR 4440 (Archaeological and Cultural Sites Reporting Form) and consult with OSA for recommendations.
 - Contact HAL’s State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for all federally funded or assisted activities, OR for activities affecting structures such as buildings or bridges over 50 years old. Apply for Section 106 review using the application form available at www.michigan.gov/HAL. Allow a minimum of 30 days for a response from SHPO.
 - Request special surveys or other follow-up activities as recommended by OSA or SHPO.
4. Conduct a preliminary meeting or other form of consultation among divisions within the Michigan DNR who are involved in developing, approving, or implementing treatments. (Note that the compartment review and/or using the Michigan DNR Intrusive Activities Approval Procedure can serve as a consultation mechanism.)
5. Consultation with Tribes:
- Notify tribal cultural resources staff from the 12 federally recognized Michigan Tribes in regard to actions on property of interest to their tribes. (This is routinely done as part of the compartment review process notification procedure.) Intrusive activities proposed and implemented outside of the compartment review process should be reviewed by the Tribal Coordinator of the division initiating the activity in order to determine the appropriateness of tribal notification. Allow a minimum of 30 days for a response.
 - Notify Michigan Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (THPOs) of federally funded or federally assisted undertakings in areas of interest to their tribes. Division Tribal Coordinators and the Michigan DNR (within Wildlife Division) Federal Aid Coordinator are available to assist with notifications. Allow a minimum of 30 days for a response from THPOs.

- The 2007 Consent Decree for the 1836 Treaty of Washington requires consultation and collaboration between the Michigan DNR and the Tribes prior to issuance of tribal permits for gathering on State Forest lands.
6. Gather input for the proposed activity from interested associations, advisory groups, interest groups and others. Compartment Review Open houses and internet postings are standard methods. Associations and advisory groups for major program areas are another, and typically include fire, recreation activities (e.g., motorized trail users, hunting interests), timber, wildlife and fisheries management interests.

The following impacts Wildlife activities and staff far more than FMFM: If the proposed activities involve a federal action (funding or other federal interest), Michigan DNR staff from the initiating division must notify the Michigan DNR's Federal Aid Coordinator (within Wildlife Division) who will make notifications and conduct consultations as required by the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). This is required because compliance with NHPA is required by the federal agency involved in the federal action. The Michigan DNR must therefore supply the federal agency with the necessary information required for the agency to document its compliance with NHPA. Allow a minimum of 60 days for a response. Ongoing and regular communication with Michigan DNR staff and appropriate federal staff should continue to ensure compliance with any regulation changes/updates.

Operations Checklist:

7. (a.) Prepare treatment proposals, and (b.) seek approval for the proposed treatment activity using appropriate Michigan DNR procedures.
8. Conduct treatments outlined in the field proposals using professional staff (e.g., Michigan DNR foresters/forest technicians and/or wildlife biologists/technicians). Forest treatments must correspond to forest inventory prescriptions. Follow Soil and Water Quality Guidelines.
9. Issue appropriate permit or contract (if applicable) to conduct treatments. This includes treatment specifications to protect environmental and archaeological/historic features.
10. Conduct and document field inspections while treatment activities are being carried out. File documented work with associated permit, contract, or proposal. Report any rare, threatened or endangered species or archaeological/historic features found during treatment activities.
11. Document completed activities or treatments and conduct final activity inspection to verify that activities have followed the planned and approved prescriptions.
12. Integrate treatment results into appropriate plans and databases.