

**Michigan Department of Natural Resources  
1994 Public Act 451, Section 52506 Report  
Fiscal Year (FY) 2012-13**

The Department of Natural Resources (Department) is required to provide a report to the Natural Resources Commission (NRC) and the Legislature that details the following:

**(a) The number of harvestable acres in the state forest, as determined by the certification program under section 52506.**

Forest certification systems evaluate whether harvesting is being conducted in accordance with sustainable forestry principles that consider a broad range of environmental, social, and economic criteria. Forest certification systems do not determine the number of harvestable acres. The 2008 Michigan State Forest Management Plan (April 10, 2008) addresses the planning requirements of Part 525 and forest certification systems, and allows for a minimum of 53,000 acres prepared for harvest each year. The Regional State Forest Management Plans were approved by the Director at the December 2013 NRC meeting and will establish new proposed harvest levels for fiscal years 2016-2025.

**(b) The number of acres of the state forest that were harvested and the number of cords of wood that were harvested from the state forest.**

There were 55,922 acres of state forest harvested in FY 2013, producing an estimated volume of 753,200 cords. Approximately 64,015 acres were prepared for timber sale auction by the Department, with an estimated volume of 942,800 cords.

**(c) The number of acres of state-owned lands owned or controlled by the Department, other than state forest lands that were harvested, and the number of cords of wood that were harvested from those lands.**

On non-state forest lands owned or controlled by the Department, there were 292 acres harvested in FY 2013, producing an estimated volume of 325 cords. Approximately 1,296 acres were prepared for timber sale auction by the Department, with an estimated volume of 8,700 cords.

**(d) Efforts by the Department to promote recreational opportunities in the state forest.**

The state forest recreation and trails programs were moved from the Forest Resources Division to the Parks and Recreation Division (PRD) effective January 1, 2012. Through a Director's land use order, state forest campgrounds and trails were designated as state recreation areas. This designation required visitors to have the Recreation Passport for access to all non-motorized trailheads and state forest campgrounds.

During FY 2013, the recreation and trails programs were promoted at outdoor shows; recreation conferences, such as the Michigan Recreation and Parks Association conference; the Michigan Snowmobile Association meetings; and through various Department press releases, publications, and the Department website.

In addition to the new off-road vehicle (ORV) and snowmobile trail maps available for download on the Department website, the Department is collaborating with ORV manufacturers to provide Michigan's designated motorized trail systems on a free mobile phone application.

The Department is embarking on a comprehensive media campaign to communicate changes associated with the restructuring of hunting, fishing and ORV licenses that will take effect starting March 1, 2014.

Press releases on camping and trails activities and recreation improvement projects on state lands are issued regularly throughout the year, as are seasonal-themed news articles for state forest camping and trail recreation opportunities.

The Department's trails programs were recognized with several national awards this year, including the da Vinci Award for accessible site design at the Ocqueoc Bicentennial Pathway, the only accessible waterfall in the United States. Also recognized by the U.S. Department of Interior was the designation of the 72-mile North Eastern State Trail as a National Recreation Trail. The East and West Twin Creek Bridges were recognized in a ceremony in Washington D.C. for "Outstanding Use of Recreation Trails Program Funds" in the category of Construction and Design.

The Department continues to collaborate with outside agencies and organizations to promote, develop, and acquire trails, including work with the Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance; the National Park Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program; the USDA National Forest; and the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT).

The Michigan Snowmobile and Trails Advisory Council (MSTAC) was created in 2010 to advise the Governor and the Department on the creation, development, operation, and maintenance of motorized and non-motorized trails in the state. The MSTAC continues to meet quarterly and completed the legislatively required Michigan Comprehensive Trails Plan on time ([www.michigan.gov/trailplan](http://www.michigan.gov/trailplan)). The next required step was for the Department to develop a State Trails Implementation Plan based on priorities identified in the Comprehensive Plan. The Implementation Plan, which was approved by the Director at the January 2014 NRC meeting, lays out priority actions the Department and MSTAC will take over the next five years to sustain Michigan's title as the Trail State.

**(e) Information on the public's utilization of the recreational opportunities offered by the state forest.**

There were 206,755 ORV trail licenses sold during FY 2013, an increase of 2,644 licenses compared to FY 2012.

There were 132,777 snowmobile trail permits sold during the 2012-13 season (September 1, 2012 through July 31, 2013), an increase of 8,490 trail permits from the 2011-12 season.

State forest camping revenue collected was approximately \$1 million in FY 2013. The FY 2013 use and revenue data was very similar to FY 2012.

In FY 2013, most of the state forest campgrounds were removed from the reservable inventory in the Central Reservation System for camping. This change in procedure addressed the lack of need for advance reservations at most state forest campgrounds. More importantly,

removing the option for advance reservations at most state forest campgrounds is aligned with customers' expectations and alleviates issues identifying occupied sites at minimally staffed facilities.

Numerous facility improvements were made during FY 2013 which benefited customer experiences.

**(f) Efforts by the Department to promote wildlife habitat in the state forest.**

The Wildlife Division works jointly with the Forest Resources Division in the compartment review process to ensure wildlife habitat management goals are reflected in the stand level treatments that are approved. In FY 2013, the Wildlife Division participated in reviewing over 412,000 acres of state forest to determine wildlife management needs. Beyond vegetative management reviews, this acreage includes consideration for habitat improvement and habitat planning on sites with specific plant and animal concerns.

The public review of final drafts of the Regional State Forest Management Plans (RSFMPs) for the northern Lower Peninsula and eastern and western Upper Peninsula began on October 14, 2013. The plans were approved by the Director at the December 2013 NRC meeting. The plans will provide direction to multi-divisional field staff for management of state forest lands.

**(g) Status of the plan and whether the Department recommends any changes in the plan.**

Operational implementation of the strategic 2008 Michigan State Forest Management Plan (SFMP) will be enabled through the RSFMPs. Upon approval of the RSFMPs, aggregated data for projected acreages and expected treatments for cover types from the RSFMPs will be added as an appendix to the SFMP.

**(h) Status of certification efforts required in section 52505 and, beginning in 2006, a definitive statement of whether the Department is maintaining certification of the entire state forest.**

The state forest system was originally awarded forest certification in December 2005 under the auspices of Sustainable Forestry Initiative® (SFI) and Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). An annual surveillance field audit was conducted by NSF-International Strategic Registrations (in partnership with Scientific Certification Systems) on October 7-11, 2013. This resulted in a recommendation for continued certification under the Department's existing FSC certificate and the issuance of a new SFI certificate. There was one major FSC Corrective Action Request (CAR) that the Department has 90 days to correct. There were also two minor FSC CARs and two minor SFI CARs. The Department is prepared to respond and correct the CARs by the prescribed deadlines in order to maintain certification.

**(i) A description of any activities that have been undertaken on forest pilot project areas described in section 52511.**

Four forest pilot project areas were established in 2006, as required by section 52511. The Department established a team which developed a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the necessary contracts, implementing bids, providing guidance, and conducting the project evaluation. The RFP was released in March 2011. Bids were received and contracts

awarded in the fall of 2011. Work will continue over four years, ending in 2015.

In 2011, bids were received for the four pilot areas as follows:

- **Shingleton Management Unit: Compartment 167 Pilot**, Stands 3, 5, 7, 22; Alger County, T48N, R16W, Section 31, N1/2 of NW1/4, SW1/4 of NW1/4, Schoolcraft County, T47N R16W, Section 6, W1/2 and Section 7, N1/2 of NW1/4; (approximately 239 acres to treat) – **Awarded to Upper Michigan Land Management & Wildlife Services in the amount of \$30,114.00**
- **Shingleton Management Unit: Compartment 73 Pilot**, Stands 20, 23, 25, 26, 27 and 48; T42N, R15W, Section 3, E1/2 W1/2, E1/2 and Section 10, NW1/4, NW1/4NE1/4; (approximately 316 acres to treat) – **Awarded to Upper Michigan Land Management & Wildlife Services in the amount of \$91,008.00**
- **Grayling Management Unit: Compartment 190 Pilot**, Stands 20, 22 and 27; T25N, R04W, Section 16, NE 1/4, W1/2SE1/4, NW1/4 SE1/4, E1/2 SW1/4; (136 acres to treat) – **No bids received**
- **Gaylord Management Unit: Compartment 145 Pilot**, Stands 32, 41 and 43, T33N, R03W, Section 6, entire except the SE1/4 of SE1/4; 640 acres (272 acres to treat) – **Awarded to Metcalfe Forestry in the amount of \$40,813.60**

Metcalfe Forestry and Upper Michigan Land Management & Wildlife Services have prepared their three pilot areas for sale. Compartment 167 was offered for sale by competitive bid on October 12, 2012 as the “167 Pilot Sale” (41-028-12-01). It was awarded to Triest Forest Products, and harvesting began in three of the payment units of the sale in October 2013. The harvesting on the sale will likely be completed in 2014.

Compartment 73 was offered for sale by competitive bid on November 27, 2012, as the “Little Buddy Sale” (41-002-13-01) and did not receive any bids. The sale was reduced in price and was re-advertised with a new bid date of January 3, 2013. The sale failed to sell at the second offering. The sale was again offered in March of 2013 with a price reduction of 50% of the original value. The contract was awarded on March 27, 2013. No harvesting has occurred on the sale to date.

Compartment 145 was offered for sale by competitive bid on December 4, 2012, as the “Pilot Project Hardwood Sale” (52-113-12-01). Great Lakes Tree Harvesting Inc. was the high bidder, and the contract was issued on December 26, 2012. The purchaser has switched harvesting methods and does not have the appropriate equipment to harvest the sale profitably. Because of this, the current purchaser is trying to have this contract reassigned to another contractor. No harvesting has occurred on this sale to date.