



LAW ENFORCEMENT DIVISION

STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-25

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES



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INTRODUCTION

Founded in 1887, the Law Enforcement Division of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources is Michigan's oldest statewide law enforcement agency. The Law Enforcement Division recognizes that it has an obligation to be responsive and accountable to the wants, needs and shared interests of our stakeholders, partners and customers. The division also welcomes the fact that it must successfully carry out multiple responsibilities while playing a primary and vital role in safeguarding Michigan's vast array of natural resources for future generations. Our Law Enforcement Division team consists of highly dedicated and motivated sworn officers and civilians who strive to protect our citizens and natural resources.

We are committed to focusing on good governance and accountability. External stakeholders, partners and customers rightly expect that government agencies will be fair, efficient and effective. The Law Enforcement Division strives to surpass those expectations. Our division personnel have similar expectations and they want to make certain that they have the training, expertise and equipment to meet the expectations of our external and internal stakeholders, partners and customers.

Personnel at all levels within the Law Enforcement Division sought the advice and counsel of various groups. These groups included outdoor recreational enthusiasts across a wide array of interest groups and geographic areas, along with partner agencies and their staff. Throughout the process of developing this strategic plan, these groups provided valuable input that significantly contributed toward the crafting of the finalized plan.

It is with deep gratitude that we thank everyone externally and internally who provided insight and input into the development of our strategic plan. This will help to guide the direction and progress of the Law Enforcement Division as we move toward future successes. It will help us preserve Michigan's vast natural resources for future generations while protecting and servicing the citizens and visitors who enjoy all this great state has to offer.

Sincerely,

The DNR Law Enforcement Division



MISSION



This strategic plan is built on the department's mission, the Law Enforcement Division's mission, and the core values of the division's officers and staff. Our core values are fundamental to our day-to-day work. In addition, the goals, objectives and strategies were developed through an engagement process that included stakeholders and division staff.

THE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES MISSION

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources is committed to the conservation, protection, management, use and enjoyment of the state's natural and cultural resources for current and future generations.

THE DEPARTMENT STRIVES TO:

- Protect natural and cultural resources
- Ensure sustainable recreation use and enjoyment
- Enable strong natural resource-based economies
- Improve and build relationships and partnerships
- Foster effective business practices and good governance

LAW ENFORCEMENT DIVISION MISSION

The mission of the Law Enforcement Division is to protect Michigan's natural resources, the environment, and the health and safety of the public through effective law enforcement and education.



CORE VALUES

The core values of the Law Enforcement Division guide us to right thinking and right action. These values are important because they describe who we are, help us understand what we must do, how we must do it and why. The core values are reflected throughout this plan and will guide its successful implementation. They include:

INTEGRITY

Behaving according to moral and ethical principles. Doing what is right even when no one else is around.

HONOR

A manner of acting and living with high quality of character and moral standards.

DEDICATION

Unwavering devotion to our values, cause and the laws we are sworn to uphold.

SERVICE

To serve something greater than yourself with loyalty and without thought for recognition or gain.

FAIRNESS

Creating an inclusive environment through equal and professional treatment.

LOYALTY

Faithfulness and devotion to our commitments, obligations, and those who depend on us.

RESPECT

To show polite regard and consideration. To show compassion toward a person and to treat them with courtesy and kindness.

COURAGE

The quality of mind and spirit that enables us to face and address difficult and dangerous situations.

JUDGMENT

The ability to judge, make a decision, or form an opinion objectively, authoritatively, and wisely.

RESPONSIBILITY

Doing what is morally right or legally required and being accountable and answerable to those actions that are within a person's power, control, or management.

ACHIEVING OUR GOALS

Achieving our goals is similar to basic fundamentals of marksmanship – a skill necessary for law enforcement personnel. These fundamentals include establishing a firm foundation, maintaining control and achieving sight alignment for future success.

FOUNDATION: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE



1966: CO Ed Ferguson receives the first set of keys to the first state issued conservation officer patrol vehicle

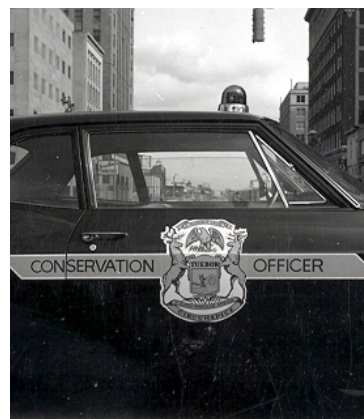
The conservation movement began during a time when most people thought natural resources were of infinite supply. When it was discovered that overexploitation of these resources (e.g., game, fish, timber, land) was occurring, Michigan citizens worked to conserve and protect what remained. This citizen-initiated effort recognized the need for regulation of natural resource use. Enforcement of those regulations set the stage for the creation of what we now call the Law Enforcement Division of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

Conservation law enforcement was established in 1887 when William Alden Smith was appointed as the first game warden in the State of Michigan long before most other Michigan law enforcement agencies were founded. The Law Enforcement Division's tradition of excellence began with his appointment as one of the first salaried game wardens in the United States.

To prevent the continued exploitation of our natural resources, the Michigan Legislature created the first fledgling agencies to manage and protect our resources and, in 1921, combined them all into one agency called the Michigan Department of Conservation. In the same year, the Conservation Commission, a citizen body appointed by the governor, was established to provide policy direction for department activities.

Since its inception, the division has undergone many necessary changes, yet the passion of its officers to protect the state's natural resources and its citizens has remained constant. Protection does not come without sacrifice. To date, 14 officers have been lost in the line of duty throughout our history.

The 1960s signaled a new era in conservation as more demands were placed on natural resources by a growing society. Renamed the "Department of Natural Resources" in 1968 to address broader responsibilities, the department and the Law Enforcement Division have continued to evolve in response to changing resource needs and priorities. In the early days, conservation officers were mainly responsible for enforcing fish and game regulations. The missions of the Department of Natural Resources and the Law Enforcement Division have expanded substantially over the years and now include protection of all natural resources and the environment, as well as the health and safety of the public through enhanced rural and urban policing, along with homeland security responsibilities.



The first state issued conservation officer vehicle was a 1966 Chevy Biscayne

Michigan conservation officers are fully commissioned as state peace officers, with full law enforcement authority to enforce all of Michigan's criminal laws. Conservation officers provide natural resources protection and ensure recreational safety, while providing general law enforcement protection in the communities they serve. They are strategically assigned throughout the state to provide services to every county





1964 Conservation Officer School

of the state, conducting regular patrols and responding to resource protection responsibilities, public safety and law enforcement needs. They also are first responders to a variety of natural disasters and emergencies. They are a unique class of law enforcement officers, whose duties include enforcing regulations for outdoor recreational activities such as off-road vehicle (ORV)

use, snowmobiling, boating, hunting and fishing. They also are empowered to arrest those who commit felonies or misdemeanors, and to enforce civil violations of Michigan law.

Conservation officers, along with support staff within the Law Enforcement Division, have a wide array of responsibilities in addition to enforcement, including education, recreational safety training, communications, emergency response, and public outreach. The division works jointly with every branch of law enforcement, whether federal, state, local or tribal. Law Enforcement Division personnel participate in multi-agency operations, patrols and training exercises with the U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service, Michigan State Police, Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy, county sheriff's departments, municipal police departments and tribal governments.

Conservation officers take pride in maintaining the highest level of professionalism as they carry out the duties of a physically and mentally demanding career.

The Law Enforcement Division has multiple responsibilities which include resource protection and public safety. These responsibilities require a state-wide approach. Conservation officers have the authority to enforce all laws anywhere within the state of Michigan with a focus on patrolling the following areas and activities for the protection of the natural resources and the people who use and enjoy them.

- Four of the five Great Lakes (including more than 3,000 miles of shoreline)
- 103 state parks and recreation areas
- Over 9 million acres of forest land open to public use (including public, commercial forest, and Hunting Access Program lands)
- More than 100 state game and wildlife areas
- Over 11,000 inland lakes
- Over 900,000 registered watercrafts (3rd in the nation), over 246,000 licensed ORVs (with over 190,000 trail permits) and over 280,000 registered snowmobiles¹
- Five national parks
- Tens of thousands of miles of rivers and streams
- Over 12,600 miles of trails (including snowmobile, ORV, equestrian, skiing, walking, biking and multi-use trails) and 6,300 miles of forest roads
- More than 1,300 public boating access sites
- 145 state forest campgrounds
- Over 1.1 million fishing licenses and over 656,000 licensed hunters²

Michigan Secretary of State¹

Michigan DNR hunting licenses for license year 2018²

CONTROL: INFORMATION GATHERING FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THIS STRATEGIC PLAN

SUCCESSSES OF THE 2015-20 LAW ENFORCEMENT DIVISION'S STRATEGIC PLAN

The Law Enforcement Division began its 2015 strategic plan development in early 2014. Interviews and discussions with external and internal stakeholder groups were a major part of developing that plan. Those discussions revealed an overall high level of interest and support for the mission of the Law Enforcement Division and the widespread recognition that conservation officers represent the “face of the Department of Natural Resources.”

As we move forward with our 2020-25 Strategic Plan, it is necessary that we look back and see whether our 2015 plan helped facilitate our promise to fulfill our mission, goals and objectives. We are proud of our accomplishments and realize that our mission is never fully complete; always challenged by many changes and continuing opportunities for improvement. Below is a sampling of our major achievements from the 2015 Strategic Plan.

- FY2013 reflected a low point for staffing in the Law Enforcement Division's history with 172 active officers. Since then, our ranks have grown. The FY2020 budget reflects the authorization for 252 officer positions. This reflects an increase of 80 officers since 2013. This includes implementing a plan to ensure at least two conservation officers are assigned in each county, except Keweenaw County which is covered by officers assigned to Houghton County.
- Appropriate staffing levels, proper equipment and training resulted in over 36 life-saving efforts by our officers through 2019
- Contacts with the public increased from 364,000 to over 480,000; 97% of which were education and outreach opportunities
- The division developed a long-term equipment and technology acquisition and replacement plan that allowed the division to enhance equipment and technology by over \$9 million through 2019
- Fully staffed the Special Investigations Unit (SIU) and Great Lakes Enforcement Unit (GLEU)
- Established a Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system and a Statewide Records Management System (SRMS)
- The division held 121 training opportunities through fall of 2019 to enhance our law enforcement capacity and capability which included management and executive level training sessions
- Employed a communications representative to enhance the division's efforts to disseminate information to the public on numerous issues and “tell our story”
- Implemented an online law enforcement training and management system to efficiently provide new and updated training courses to our officers and staff



DEVELOPING A 2020-25 PLAN FOR CONTINUED SUCCESS

Throughout the 2015-20 Strategic Plan, the Law Enforcement Division kept in close touch with our stakeholder groups, recorded the metrics of our efforts, and adjusted the plan where necessary. In preparation for our 2020 Strategic Plan, the Law Enforcement Division reconnected with our external and internal stakeholders to review our accomplishments, reconfirm our focus, and investigate new challenges and opportunities and potential goals and objectives to ensure continued success. Starting in early 2018, the Law Enforcement Division conducted surveys, focus groups, and discussions with our constituents, leaders, employees and customers. We are pleased to have learned that our constituency groups reported that they continue to believe conservation officers exhibit the highest level of professionalism, competency, and dedication to duty. Once again, the final product of the strategic planning effort reflects the external and internal stakeholders' input and creates a practical and measurable guide to effectively carry forward and extend the work and responsibilities of the division into the future. The continuing challenges and opportunities which were raised in the interviews and focus groups that were recommended for inclusion in the 2020 Strategic Plan include:

- Continued vigilance in maintaining, and in some cases increasing, staffing levels to meet the challenges and opportunities based on geography; crime; wildlife and aquatic diseases; environmental and invasive species data; and population base
- Continue to provide general law enforcement augmentation

to rural and urban communities including efforts in emergency management and emergency response capabilities

- Continue to adequately equip conservation officers and staff to enable them to do their jobs effectively and efficiently
- Continue to recruit, retain and train a workforce that is inclusive, diverse, capable and dedicated to the protection of our natural and cultural resources and public safety
- Be inclusive and engage with our constituents and employees to innovate solutions to our challenges
- Continue efforts to strengthen partnerships between the Law Enforcement Division and other law enforcement agencies, other Department of Natural Resources divisions, and resource protection groups across the state and region
- Continue to bring awareness to the public and stakeholder groups of the need and efforts to protect our natural and cultural resources, the citizens of Michigan and visitors to the state
- Continue to be good stewards of the public trust and public funds that we are fortunate to receive

SIGHT ALIGNMENT: WHAT WE ARE AIMING FOR

GOAL 1 PRESERVE AND PROTECT THE NATURAL, CULTURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES WHICH HAVE BEEN ENTRUSTED IN OUR CARE

OBJECTIVE 1.1 Maintain current conservation officer coverage and conduct effective patrols to ensure resource protection and public safety

- Provide an adaptive staffing plan based on geography, complaint load, wildlife disease, invasive species, crime data and population base
- Conduct dedicated patrols to meet targeted resource protection goals
- Allocate budget and staff to meet resource protection needs

OBJECTIVE 1.2 Emphasize and increase collaboration with other agencies with similar resource protection and public safety goals

- Conduct joint enforcement investigations, operations, and training sessions
- Participate in multi-agency work groups, committees and conferences that focus on the protection of natural resources
- Regularly share information and updates with law enforcement partners

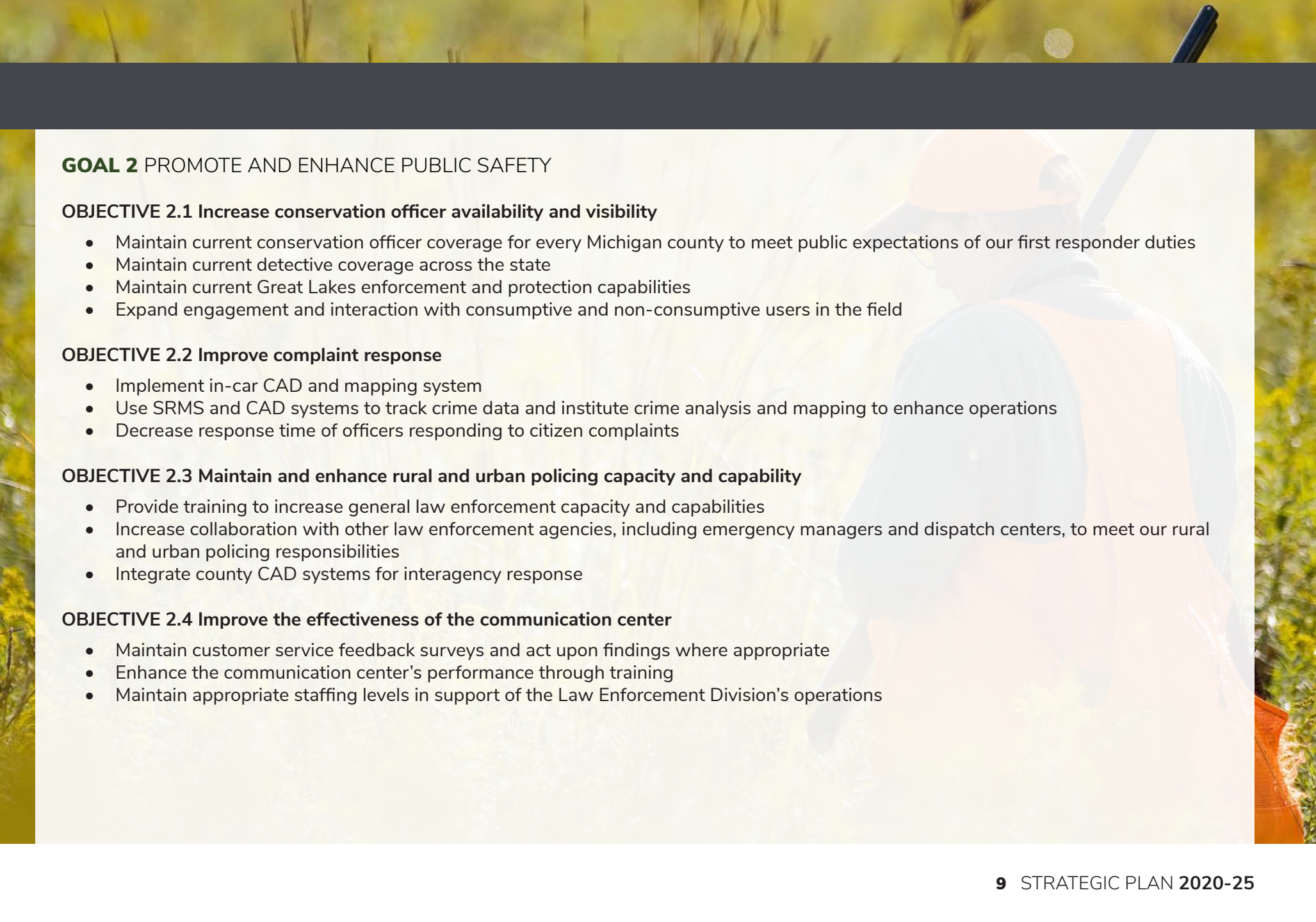
OBJECTIVE 1.3 Develop and maintain knowledge and interpretation of changing laws and regulations

- Implement an internal, searchable tracking system for legal and policy questions and answers
- Collaborate with legislative partners on natural resource law enforcement protection initiatives and statutory changes
- Conduct legal, policy and regulatory analysis and share them with staff and partners
- Utilize an online training management system to ensure knowledge of changing laws, court rulings and division policies
- Increase Law Enforcement Division's input for legislative and policy guidance during the development of resource protection statutes and regulations

OBJECTIVE 1.4 Provide staff with the appropriate equipment to adequately protect the natural resources and provide for public safety

- Utilize the life-cycle equipment replacement plan
- Use SRMS to improve and track equipment maintenance and use
- Solicit field/staff input for new equipment acquisition/testing
- Provide new equipment training to appropriate staff





GOAL 2 PROMOTE AND ENHANCE PUBLIC SAFETY

OBJECTIVE 2.1 Increase conservation officer availability and visibility

- Maintain current conservation officer coverage for every Michigan county to meet public expectations of our first responder duties
- Maintain current detective coverage across the state
- Maintain current Great Lakes enforcement and protection capabilities
- Expand engagement and interaction with consumptive and non-consumptive users in the field

OBJECTIVE 2.2 Improve complaint response

- Implement in-car CAD and mapping system
- Use SRMS and CAD systems to track crime data and institute crime analysis and mapping to enhance operations
- Decrease response time of officers responding to citizen complaints

OBJECTIVE 2.3 Maintain and enhance rural and urban policing capacity and capability

- Provide training to increase general law enforcement capacity and capabilities
- Increase collaboration with other law enforcement agencies, including emergency managers and dispatch centers, to meet our rural and urban policing responsibilities
- Integrate county CAD systems for interagency response

OBJECTIVE 2.4 Improve the effectiveness of the communication center

- Maintain customer service feedback surveys and act upon findings where appropriate
- Enhance the communication center's performance through training
- Maintain appropriate staffing levels in support of the Law Enforcement Division's operations

SIGHT ALIGNMENT: WHAT WE ARE AIMING FOR

GOAL 3 IMPROVE AND ENHANCE THE PUBLIC'S UNDERSTANDING OF THE DIVISION'S EFFORTS IN RESOURCE PROTECTION, PUBLIC SAFETY AND LAW ENFORCEMENT THROUGH COMMUNICATION, EDUCATION AND ENGAGEMENT

OBJECTIVE 3.1 Increase public and media outreach efforts

- Increase promotion and advertising of the Report All Poaching program through innovative and diverse means to broaden public participation in natural resource crime fighting
- Utilize the division's communication plan in innovative and collaborative ways to disseminate information, educate the public, help solve crimes and "tell our story"
- Produce and publish an annual report of efforts and accomplishments
- Expand engagement and interaction with users through attendance and presentations at user group events

OBJECTIVE 3.2 Provide effective educational programming to increase recreational safety

- Ensure officer participation in recreation safety programs
- Promote and enhance web-based training opportunities for the public
- Recruit and train new volunteer recreational safety instructors
- Conduct at least one hunter safety field day per district, coordinated and facilitated by division personnel

GOAL 4 DEVELOP AND FOSTER EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS THAT INCREASE OUR CAPACITY TO PROVIDE NATURAL RESOURCE PROTECTION AND PUBLIC SAFETY

OBJECTIVE 4.1 Identify and foster key partnership opportunities

- Maintain current lists of constituent groups and key partners in each district and engage with them frequently
- Provide staff with training and resources to help foster and grow partnerships

OBJECTIVE 4.2 Actively participate in professional organizations and collaborate with conservation partners that have shared goals of resource protection and public safety

- Develop performance objectives to ensure collaboration with conservation and law enforcement partners in each district and section
- Participate and collaborate with national and international organizations that combat resource and environmental exploitation

OBJECTIVE 4.3 Actively collaborate with other State of Michigan departments and divisions to meet our resource protection and public safety goals

- Maintain division-wide work plans at all levels to facilitate cross departmental and divisional communication and cooperation
- Collect information and report on collaborative efforts within each district



GOAL 5 ATTRACT, MAINTAIN AND SUPPORT A HIGHLY QUALIFIED, DIVERSE, PROFESSIONAL AND DEDICATED STAFF OF SWORN OFFICERS AND CIVILIAN PERSONNEL

OBJECTIVE 5.1 Maintain effective recruiting efforts statewide

- Maintain a division-wide recruitment team with diverse members
- Continually review and revise our recruitment plan to ensure inclusive and equitable processes to attract a diverse pool of candidates

OBJECTIVE 5.2 Enhance employee effectiveness, retention and career satisfaction

- Develop an annual training plan for division personnel based on needs identified by employees, management, and stakeholders
- Identify or develop training courses addressing officer health, physical fitness and wellness
- Develop and implement a wellness program that includes peer support and opportunities to receive professional support through times of crisis
- Identify and evaluate factors that contribute to staff longevity and enrichment by conducting after action reviews, surveys, research and planning
- Develop and monitor an Employee Engagement Plan

OBJECTIVE 5.3 Encourage and promote professional growth for employees

- Use performance management to identify and implement areas for professional growth and training
- Promote participation in temporary assignments and mentoring opportunities
- Develop trained pools of officers to participate as temporary corporals and detectives in GLEU and SIU
- Provide leadership opportunities and specialized training opportunities

OBJECTIVE 5.4 Increase internal communication effectiveness

- Continue Quarterly Supervisor Meetings and implement Bi-annual Sergeant Meetings to improve the information sharing process
- Train and enhance the use of the online training management system for communication and training needs of the division
- Maintain weekly synchronization meetings between supervisors



SIGHT ALIGNMENT: WHAT WE ARE AIMING FOR

GOAL 6 SERVE AS EFFECTIVE STEWARDS OF PUBLIC TRUST MONIES BY INCREASING THE EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE LAW ENFORCEMENT DIVISION

OBJECTIVE 6.1 Promote best management practices for administrative processes

- Implement a workgroup to review administrative processes and recommend improved efficiencies
- Establish training programs for effective management and administrative processes

OBJECTIVE 6.2 Optimize individual officer performance, effectiveness and safety using technology

- Utilize the SRMS and Automatic Resource Locator system to increase officer safety and decrease response time for citizen complaints
- Review and evaluate emerging technologies through regular meetings of the technology committee
- Develop an online training curriculum for staff
- Staff a conservation officer specialist to improve software and hardware up-time, manage technology projects, and problem-solve technology issues

OBJECTIVE 6.3 Remain accountable in the use of public trust funds

- Develop and implement an annual work resources and accountability plan
- Create a spend plan review process that includes budgetary and accounting targets
- Conduct monthly quarterly program and budget reviews
- Conduct a year-end review to analyze program effectiveness



MEASUREMENTS OF SUCCESS AND REALIGNMENT THROUGH TIME

With the completion of this plan, and in the context of the wider use of outcome measures by the department and the governor's office, the division is moving forward with the development of metrics to measure how well we are meeting the goals established in this plan. This will help us communicate our accomplishments and will allow the citizens we serve to better understand the tasks we undertake to protect resources, the environment and the public.

This plan will be revisited every five years to help ensure we are still on target and are meeting our goals.

We could not have developed this plan without the sincere and earnest input from stakeholders and division staff. The types of stakeholder groups we received input from included:

- People of Michigan
- Sportspersons and all outdoor recreation enthusiasts
- Sporting clubs and organizations
- Conservation groups
- Governor's office
- Michigan Legislature
- Tribal governments
- Federal, state, local and tribal law enforcement agencies and organizations
- Natural Resource Commission
- Department of Natural Resources leadership and staff
- Law Enforcement Division officers and staff
- Department of Agriculture & Rural Development leadership and staff
- Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy leadership and staff

