

# Summary of Fisheries Division Documents Outlining Public Access Goals

## **Fisheries Division Draft 2012 Strategic Plan**

(Public availability ~ December 2012)

Goal 2: Diverse Fishing Opportunities

Objective 2: Create or enhance fishing opportunities.

Strategy 1: Identify and catalog areas where fishing access is needed, prioritize locations, and work with partners to address these needs.

## **Fisheries Division 2002 Strategic Plan**

<http://dnrintranet/pdfs/divisions/fish/strategicplan/March2002.pdf>

### **Small Boat and Shore Access**

Public access to fishing waters is obviously necessary for most citizens to enjoy angling opportunities. The State provides such access through the Department of Natural Resources Parks and Recreation Division. However, their access program is funded by taxes on fuel used by boats. Therefore, the provision of harbors and docks on the Great Lakes and the development of inland access sites on larger bodies of water are given priority. These sites are designed for trailerable boats and they are not built on waters which cannot support general boating use.

Many anglers fish primarily from shore or using small boats and desire to fish in smaller, more secluded waters lacking high speed boating and water skiing usage. A significant portion of Michigan's anglers would be better served by the provision of small boat and shore-fishing access. Carry-in boat access to small lakes is also very popular with a segment of anglers. We need to provide such facilities on properties managed by other DNR Divisions including Parks and Recreation, Forest Management, and Wildlife. We also need to assist access development by local governments and other agencies through existing grant programs administered by Fisheries and Parks and Recreation Divisions. We should aggressively defend existing public access wherever it is threatened by actions of local governmental agencies or property owner associations.

Access to river and stream fishing is also very important to many anglers. There is room for expansion of riverine fisheries provided that public access is assured. We need to aggressively advocate the legal acceptance of the recreational definition of navigability as opposed to the commercial definition which currently severely restricts public use of our rivers and streams. We also need to provide access facilities on properties managed by other DNR Divisions. Existing federal regulations mandate the provision of public access facilities in connection with hydroelectric power generation facilities. We

should work with the power generation companies to assure that they meet this requirement.

### **Urban Initiatives**

The percentage of citizens living in metropolitan areas has increased from 56% in 1950 to 78% in 1990. They are also the areas where people are most alienated from the amenities of the natural world and where it is most difficult and most expensive to provide citizens access to the natural wonders of our State.

In this strategy, the Fisheries Division will continue its emphasis of the last five years on managing fisheries in southern Michigan. We will continue to advocate acquisition and development of shore fishing and small boat access to waters in southern Michigan. Urban residents are expected to make significant use of the improved fishing information services we propose in this strategy. We will continue to pursue and participate in developing comprehensive management plans for each of the major rivers in urban areas of the State. Our efforts along these lines will be coordinated with the efforts of other Divisions under the DNR Southern Michigan Recreation Initiative.

### **Public Access and Local Services**

*Through appropriate technical and financial assistance, secure public access and local services to accommodate fishing on waters that can sustain public fisheries.*

The Fisheries Division is not a designated land management unit. Yet the Division does manage land in conjunction with its hatcheries, fisheries stations, administrative facilities and public access sites. This non-designation is a formidable barrier in the Division's land acquisition program. Department policy dictates that all land be assigned to a land-managing Division. Frequently parcels with public fishing access potential are not acquired due to the lack of a designated land management unit willing to assume ownership and maintenance responsibilities.

Public access is essential to the Division's programs and wise resource management. It is imperative for the Division's capability to service the angling public that this acquisition barrier be removed. Resolution of this problem has reached an impasse. Management Team should seek to have a Department Office/Division assigned responsibility for land management responsibilities for fishery access sites.

Current objectives for this area are:

- 1) prepare and maintain a statewide priority list for acquisition and development that considers all waters;
- 2) establish a fishing access acquisition and development program based on statewide priorities;
- 3) encourage the establishment of a land holding section within the Department for non-dedicated land or find alternatives outside of state government;
- 4) foster the adoption of local regulations on bodies of water where recreational conflicts, habitat damage or safety issues exist;

- 5) insure acquisitions, development and maintenance of fishing access with federal money specified under the Wallop-Breaux amendment of the Dingell-Johnson Act;
- 6) incorporate initial site cleanup, surveying and boundary identification, and control as part of the normal land acquisition process and budget;
- 7) enhance existing and new facilities to accommodate the handicapped according to the Americans with Disabilities Act; and
- 8) work with Parks and Recreation Division and federal and local units of government to develop appropriate access site rules to ensure that recreational angling interests are protected.

### **Fisheries Division 1994 Strategic Plan**

<http://dnrintranet/pdfs/divisions/fish/strategicplan/June-1994.pdf>

(language similar to that of 2002 Strategic Plan)

### **Fisheries Division 5 Year Budget Plan Fiscal Years 2005-2009**

[http://dnrintranet/pdfs/divisions/fish/Budget\\_Programs/5yr-plan/5-year-Budget-Plan-FY05-09-intranet.doc](http://dnrintranet/pdfs/divisions/fish/Budget_Programs/5yr-plan/5-year-Budget-Plan-FY05-09-intranet.doc)

### ***Recreational Fisheries Sub-program***

The fourth objective in this Sub-program is Public Access and Local Services. We attempt to secure public access and local services to accommodate fishing on waters that can sustain public fisheries. Specific activities to accomplish this objective include:

- Access sites
  - Prepare and maintain a statewide priority list for acquisition and development.
  - Work with other divisions to gain new access for fishing on state-owned lands.
  - Develop small-scale fishing access sites.
  - Assist Parks and Recreation Division in promoting conservation ethics at access sites.
  - Assist Parks and Recreation Division with maintenance of fishing access sites.
  - Assist Parks and Recreation Division in developing fishing piers at access sites.
  - Enhance existing and new facilities to accommodate the handicapped according to the Department's 504 Transition Plan.

### **Fisheries Division River Assessments**

[http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-153-10364\\_52259\\_10951\\_19056-46270--,00.htm](http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-153-10364_52259_10951_19056-46270--,00.htm)

Information contained in these assessments is a compilation of not only river related problems but opportunities as well. Each river assessment serves as a tool which can be used to assist the management decision process and increase public understanding and foster their involvement in management decisions.

At present, sixteen River Assessments have been prepared by Fisheries Division and cover major watersheds throughout the state. Each of these assessments documents the importance and need for improved recreational access to waters and the acquisition of lands for aquatic habitat protection. Two of the assessments, St. Joseph River and Kalamazoo River, specifically recommend at least one public access site for every six miles of river.