

Summary of Public Comments Received and Responses to the Draft Updated GPS

On January 8, 2016, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) released a draft of the updated Guiding Principles and Strategies (GPS), the DNR's Wildlife Division's strategic plan for public review and comment. During the comment period, individuals submitted 137 emails that offered comments on the draft plan. The purpose of this document is to provide to the public a meaningful summary of the comments received on the draft update to the plan; and to provide a response to those who requested specific plan changes. To accomplish this task, DNR staff read each email submitted. Interpretation and summarization of the diverse set of comments in each email and determining if there were changes suggested to the plan was a difficult challenge. We did our best to summarize the comments into a more concise set of concerns that could be addressed efficiently while maintaining consistency in our interpretations. Comments fell mainly into these categories:

1. Deer management (77)
2. Predator management (19)
3. License structure (8)
4. Funding wildlife management (6)
5. Habitat management (5)
6. Upland game birds and waterfowl management (5)
7. Bear management (3)
8. Recommendations on GPS (6)
9. Miscellaneous comments (30)

Some emails included comments of multiple types, and therefore the total number of emails does not equal the total number of people commenting on each topic. Most comments were directed towards how we managed specific species and not specific in terms of changes to the strategic plan.

Species Management Comments:

Many factors come into play in addressing specific species management concerns, and the work to address these factors will occur during implementation of the plan under GPS Objective 1.1 (planning), Objective 1.2 (research and assessments), Objective 1.4 (policies and regulations), and Objective 1.5 (human-wildlife conflict).

Deer management comments were mainly about: adding or removing antler point restrictions, increasing or decreasing the number of doe permits, removing or modifying the youth hunt, increasing or decreasing baiting restrictions.

Many of the predator management comments revolved around wolf management. For more information about wolf management, please see the Department's Wolves in Michigan page:

<http://www.mi.gov/wolves>.

Other species specific comments touched on pheasant management, bear management including baiting and hunting with dogs, volunteer opportunities for surveying grouse, limiting use of all-terrain vehicles in bird hunting, and wanting more public land for upland game bird and waterfowl hunting.

Other Types of Comments:

Habitat management comments included concerns over forest management techniques and requests for more wetland management. These types of questions will be addressed during the implementation of the GPS and mainly fall under GPS Objective 2.1 (habitat planning) and Objective 2.2 (habitat management) and are directed through Master Plans for State Game Areas and Regional Forest Management Plans for State Forest lands.

The license structure and funding comments included concerns over declining participation in hunting, suggestions for streamlining hunting licensing, concerns over the cost of hunting licenses, suggestions to seek funds from non-hunting sources, and charging for use of grouse enhanced management sites (GEMS) and managed waterfowl hunting areas. These types of comments are more focused on the implementation of the GPS, and mainly fall under GPS Objectives 4.2, 4.3, 6.5 and 6.6.

Specific Changes Suggested to GPS:

Specific changes suggested to GPS	Response
Streamline the GPS; less introductory material	We felt it was important to retain much of introductory material from the old GPS in the updated GPS, so that people didn't have to hunt for the information and because we felt that it provides a good context for the plan. However, we did try to streamline the introductory material somewhat from the draft to the final version.
Include tactics	Our tactics for the plan are developed through our annual work planning process.
Include the idea of stewardship responsibility for all Michigan residents	Suggestion accepted; the concept was added to the Welcome section.
Include ways to measure success	Measuring success is very important to the DNR. We have developed metrics for each of our objectives in the GPS, and we will update the metrics to reflect the updated plan. We share metrics data with the public through our Annual Reports to show how we are implementing the GPS.
Promote a better balance between the consumptive and non-consumptive wildlife recreation portions of Goal 4; and more focus on wildlife watchers	We did try to have congruence between hunting and trapping and other wildlife-based recreation like wildlife viewing in Goal 4. We have two objectives (4.2 and 4.3) to focus on hunting and trapping retention and recruitment. And we have two objectives (4.4 and 4.5) to focus on other types of wildlife recreation.