



Hunting Access Program in Northern Michigan

A financial opportunity that increases public access to hunting on private land in the northern Lower Peninsula

What is HAP?

HAP, the Hunting Access Program, provides an annual payment to private landowners to allow public hunting on their land. The DNR leases private lands from landowners who give licensed hunters access to their property. Landowners are given flexible options for the type of hunt and a maximum number of hunters allowed at one time on a first-come, first-served basis. Hunters using HAP lands are guests of the landowner and required to register each time they visit the property. Hunting is the only activity permitted.

Why HAP in the Northern Lower?

The DNR aims to promote and support Michigan’s hunting heritage and local economic development by providing more hunting opportunities through HAP. Similar to southern Michigan, agricultural areas in the NLP contain a high proportion of private lands and offer limited public hunting opportunities. Expanding HAP to the NLP will produce tangible habitat improvements and increased hunting opportunities to assist in reducing the transmission of Bovine TB as well as reducing the negative impacts of agricultural damage caused by wildlife.



What’s in it for landowners?

HAP offers landowners a chance to increase farm or property income and a way to support Michigan’s hunting heritage. The annual payment you receive is calculated based on a combination of land cover types (up to \$25/acre) and acres available for hunting, habitat quality and the types of hunting you decide to allow (not including land within the legal 450’ safety zone).

As a HAP landowner, you are also eligible to receive funding for habitat improvements on your land including food plots, grasses and soft mast trees and shrubs.

Who can enroll in HAP?

Landowners within eligible NLP counties owning 40 or more acres are eligible to apply. HAP leases can include grassland and cropland (orchard, pasture, hay, crops), forest, and/or wetland. A minimum of 5 percent of the contracted acres must be in wildlife habitat (grassland, forest or wetland).

What are the hunters’ responsibilities?



Hunters must register at the provided hunter registration box (self-serve optional) each visit, observe all instructions of the landowner; know the property boundaries and not trespass on adjacent property; not block field access routes or drive in fields without the host’s permission; leave no trash; observe all hunting and trapping rules and regulations; and observe safety zones around buildings.

Are landowners protected from liability?

Yes. Landowners have liability protection as stated in P.A. 451 of 1994: “A cause of action shall not arise for injuries to persons hunting on lands leased under [HAP] unless the injuries were caused by gross negligence or willful and wanton misconduct of the owner, tenant, or lessee.”

Where to get more information?

Program assistance is conveniently available in most counties at your local conservation district office, visiting the HAP webpage www.michigan.gov/hap, or contact the DNR at 517-284-9453 or email DNR-HAP@michigan.gov.