

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES



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The **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 — a role it has embraced since creation of Michigan's original Conservation Department in 1921.

In early 2011, Governor Rick Snyder issued Executive Order 2011-1, which abolished the Department of Natural Resources and Environment (created a year earlier by former Governor Jennifer M. Granholm) and forming “new” individual agencies: the Department of Natural Resources and the Department of Environmental Quality. In making the announcement, Governor Snyder said that by operating as separate departments, each would be better able to focus on its core mission.

“Michigan is blessed with an abundance of natural resources and we need to be a leader and innovator in protecting these resources,” Governor Snyder said. “Recreational fishing, hunting and boating activities alone contribute more than \$3 billion annually to our economy. Separating the DEQ and DNR means we can better address these key priorities.”

An earlier executive order (2009-45) issued by Gov. Granholm stated that, consistent with Section 3 of Article V of the Michigan Constitution of 1963, the director of the DNR shall be appointed by the governor, subject to disapproval under Section 6 of Article V of the Michigan Constitution of 1963, and shall serve at the pleasure of the governor. The director functions as the department's chief executive officer, monitors program activities to ensure efficiency and effectiveness of department operations, and ensures that the department's mission, policies, and statutory mandates are met. The director's primary authority flows from the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act (Act 451 of 1994, as amended) and is authorized by Executive Order 1991-31 to delegate decision-making authorities to appropriate levels within the department.

The Department of Natural Resources divisions, programs and offices are housed within 2 main bureaus (Natural Resources and Administration), while some other positions report directly to the department director.

Natural Resources Bureau

The **Natural Resources Bureau** includes the Fisheries Division, the Forest Management Division, the Law Enforcement Division, the Parks and Recreation Division, and the Wildlife Division.

The **Fisheries Division** (www.michigan.gov/fishing) is mandated to protect and manage the state's aquatic resources, including fish populations, other aquatic life, and aquatic habitat, which are held in trust for all Michigan's citizens. The division promotes the wise use of these resources for the benefit of current and future generations.

Michigan offers a wealth of fishing opportunities with its 2 peninsulas that touch 4 of the 5 Great Lakes. The state is blessed with more than 11,000 inland lakes and 36,000 miles of rivers

and streams, including 1,000 miles of blue-ribbon trout streams. Michigan has 3,000 miles of freshwater shoreline — more than any other state — and more total shoreline than any state except Alaska. In Michigan, you're never more than 85 miles from one of the Great Lakes. In fact, in April 2011, *Field & Stream* magazine's "FlyTalk" blog ranked Michigan as the top fly-fishing state in the nation, basing on factors including all-around opportunities, angler-friendly environment, and cultural affinity to fly-fishing.

Fish populations and other forms of aquatic life are monitored and studied by biologists, who strive to ensure their long-term protection while keeping fishing in Michigan among the nation's best. Up to 14 fish species are hatched and reared at six state hatcheries, which have state-of-the-art facilities to produce fish of very high quality. These fish are stocked annually into designated public waters throughout the state to maintain or improve fish populations. Michigan ranks sixth in the nation in fishing with 1.4 million resident licensed anglers, who — together with 300,000 nonresident anglers — contribute \$2 billion annually to Michigan's economy.

The **Forest Management Division** (www.michigan.gov/forestplan) protects, manages, and guides the use of a healthy forest resource base for the social, recreational, environmental, and economic benefit of current and future generations. Michigan has one of the largest dedicated state forest systems in the nation, spanning 3.9 million acres. This division manages the state forest system for timber production, providing a stable source of timber for industry. Forests are also managed for soil and water-quality protection, recreation and (through co-management with the Wildlife Division) wildlife habitat. The division administers 6.4 million acres of Michigan's mineral estate, which includes leasing the rights to explore for state-owned metallic, nonmetallic, oil and gas minerals, and underground gas storage areas. These leases annually contribute between \$40 million and \$55 million to Michigan's unique Natural Resources Trust Fund for recreational land acquisition and development, the State Parks Endowment Fund for parks improvement, and the Game and Fish Protection Trust Fund for game and fish management.

The **Law Enforcement Division** (www.michigan.gov/conservationofficers) is home to Michigan's conservation officers. Its mission is to protect Michigan's natural resources and environment, and the health and safety of the public through effective law enforcement and education. Conservation officers are state-licensed law enforcement officers with authority to administer all the criminal/civil laws of Michigan and whose primary duties focus on enforcing regulations for outdoor recreation activities, such as off-road vehicle use, snowmobiling, boating, hunting, and fishing. They, along with other support staff within the Law Enforcement Division, handle a wide array of other responsibilities, including education, recreational safety, and public outreach. The division also provides investigative and enforcement services and coordinates emergency management and homeland security responsibilities for the department.

The **Parks and Recreation Division** (www.michigan.gov/stateparks) protects, preserves, acquires and manages Michigan's state parks, recreation areas, cultural and historic resources, and more than 1,000 boating access sites. It also operates 17 state harbors and partners with 63 locally operated, public harbors that make up the Harbors of Refuge system. Michigan's 99 state parks and recreation areas host more than 22 million visitors annually and are a big attraction for Michigan's tourism industry, contributing \$650 million to the state in day use and camping alone.

The Recreation Passport (introduced October 2010) provides a new way to sustainably fund programs for state parks, forest recreation, state trails and historic and cultural resources, and provides park development grants to local communities. Priced at just \$10 per vehicle (\$5 per motorcycle) and available for purchase to Michigan motorists when renewing their annual license plate registrations, the Recreation Passport replaced the window sticker for entry into all Michigan state parks, recreation areas, and boat launches, making it easier and more affordable for people to enjoy and support outdoor recreation opportunities in Michigan.

The **Wildlife Division's** (www.michigan.gov/wildlife) mission is "to enhance, restore and conserve the state's wildlife resources, natural communities and ecosystems for the benefit of Michigan's citizens, visitors and future generations." The conservation of more than 400 species of animals — the birds and mammals that sustain our state's hunting heritage, as well as nongame wildlife, including threatened and endangered plant and animal species, is part of that mission. In addition, the Wildlife Division co-manages the state forests with the Forest Management Division and directly administers approximately 450,000 acres of state game and wildlife management areas. Biologists make sound, science-based recommendations on hunting regulations, habitat management, and public hunting access, and protect more than 340 threatened and endangered plant and animal species.

Michigan is among the top states in the nation in almost every hunting category with more than 750,000 licensed hunters contributing \$1.3 billion annually to the state economy, while Michigan's wildlife watchers spend \$1.62 billion. The Nongame Fish and Wildlife Fund, supported through donations and the purchase of the Michigan Wildlife Habitat license plate, supports natural heritage research, education and habitat restoration projects to identify, protect, manage, and restore native plant and animal species.

Administration Bureau

The **Administration Bureau** includes the Finance and Operations Division, the Marketing and Outreach Division, the Michigan Historical Center, the Office of Legal Services, and the Technology Section.

The **Finance and Operations Division** provides a complete range of financial and administrative support, including budget and financial services, facilities management, real estate, grants, field operations support, and business operations.

The **Marketing and Outreach Division** provides an array of services, including hunter and angler recruitment and retention, communications, website administration, license sales customer systems, marketing, and educational programs for all ages and experience levels. The division's efforts are chiefly designed to find creative, new ways to get more Michigan residents and visitors outside, enjoying our state's unmatched natural spaces, and taking advantage of the growing variety of recreation opportunities.

The **Michigan Historical Center's** (www.michigan.gov/michiganhistory) museum and archival programs help people discover, enjoy, and find inspiration in their heritage. The center includes the Michigan Historical Museum, 10 regional museums, the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary, and the Underwater Preserve and the Archives of Michigan. These educational, interactive sites annually welcome over 300,000 visitors of all ages, including more than 80,000 schoolchildren who explore MHC's flagship museum in Lansing every year. The center also includes the Michigan Freedom Trail Commission; the Michigan Historical Commission; the Michigan Historical Marker program; the Michigan Iron Industry Museum Advisory Board; and Seeking Michigan (www.seekingmichigan.org), an evolving website bringing even more people in touch with the stories of Michigan's families, homes, businesses, communities and landscapes as told by unique, digitized source documents, maps, films, images, oral histories, and artifacts.

The **Office of Legal Services** is the department's liaison to the Office of Attorney General for litigation involving state properties, employees, and natural resource-related injuries. The office also provides guidance on response to Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests and assists in drafting and updating department policies and procedures, administrative rules, and DNR director's orders for land use, fisheries, and wildlife conservation. The office also maintains original signed memoranda of understanding (MOUs) and other interagency agreements and makes recommendations on contract and grant agreement language.

The **Technology Section** provides central coordination for all of the department's information-technology (IT) activities. It serves as the single point of contact in working with the Department of Technology, Management and Budget to address department IT priorities, status, and needs. This includes critical work on long-term planning, funding, and initiatives; the development and maintenance of applications; resolving address and network issues; and completing inventories. The Technology Section is also responsible for compliance with data privacy and security standards, IT data storage limitations, Internet connectivity, and email usage and storage.



The DNR also encompasses several individuals, entities, offices, committees, and commissions that help preserve, promote, and interpret Michigan's historic and cultural resources and provide essential support and guidance to the above-referenced programs. They include:

The **Tribal Coordination Office** works to develop and sustain positive and mutually beneficial, cooperative relationships with native Michigan tribes, with emphasis on the natural resource provisions of the 1842 Treaty and the 1836 Treaty, with its associated Great Lakes and Inland Consent Decrees.

The **Upper Peninsula Regional Office** serves to represent the department and director in the Upper Peninsula by working closely with stakeholders, media outlets, community organizations,

local units of government, elected officials, and the public to build awareness and understanding of department policies and programs, natural resource-related issues, and outdoor recreation opportunities.

The **Public Information Office** works closely with the executive office and department divisions to coordinate the communication of core DNR messages on a statewide basis to a variety of audiences, serves as primary contact for media representatives, and assists in the marketing of department initiatives, programs, and services — all in an effort to strengthen the public's connection to Michigan's natural and cultural resources.

The **Policy and Legislative offices** focus their efforts on administrative rules and regulations and emerging natural resources issues, strengthening the department's relationship with the legislature, helping to evaluate and set department policy, and assisting the director and management team with strategic planning, implementation of department priorities, and special assignments.

The **Michigan Natural Resources Commission** (www.michigan.gov/nrc) is a 7-member public body whose members are appointed by the governor and subject to the advice and consent of the Senate. The NRC's primary authority flows from the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act (Act 451 of 1994, as amended). This act codified nearly 200 applicable statutes, many dating back to the 1800s. Voter adoption of Proposal G in 1996 vests exclusive authority in the NRC to regulate the taking of game. Residents are encouraged to attend and become actively involved in the commission's regularly scheduled monthly public forums.

The **Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund** (www.michigan.gov/dnr-grants) was created in 1976, thanks to forward-thinking state leadership, for the purpose of providing financial assistance to local units of government and to the DNR — helping these agencies purchase land or rights in land to create better public outdoor-recreation opportunities or to protect an area because of its environmental importance or scenic beauty. The board of trustees of the fund submits to the legislature a list of those lands, rights in lands and facilities to be developed, in order of priority. The list must then be approved by the legislature and signed by the governor before purchases are made. The MNRTF has, in large part, been responsible for helping to create Michigan's enviable local and state park recreation system (including trails) and state forest system. It has, to date, awarded more than \$873 million toward land acquisition and public outdoor-recreation development projects in every county throughout Michigan.

The **Mackinac Island State Park Commission** is an autonomous entity with authority to acquire, construct, maintain, and improve property related to the historic Straits of Mackinac. The commission was formed in 1895 and is responsible for all aspects of managing Mackinac State Historic Parks (www.mackinacparks.com). It meets approximately 5 times a year and is made up of 7 members appointed by the governor and confirmed by the state senate. Commissioners serve 6-year terms.

Additionally, there are several committees and councils that advise the department. These include (but are not limited to):

- Michigan Snowmobile and Trails Advisory Council
- Waterways Commission
- Upper Peninsula Citizens' Advisory Councils

Learn more about all of the DNR's many advisory bodies by visiting www.michigan.gov/dnr, choosing "About the DNR" and then selecting "Commissions, Boards and Committees."

