

Forest Recreation and Commercial Forests – Economics and Usage



Forest Mineral and Fire Management
Division
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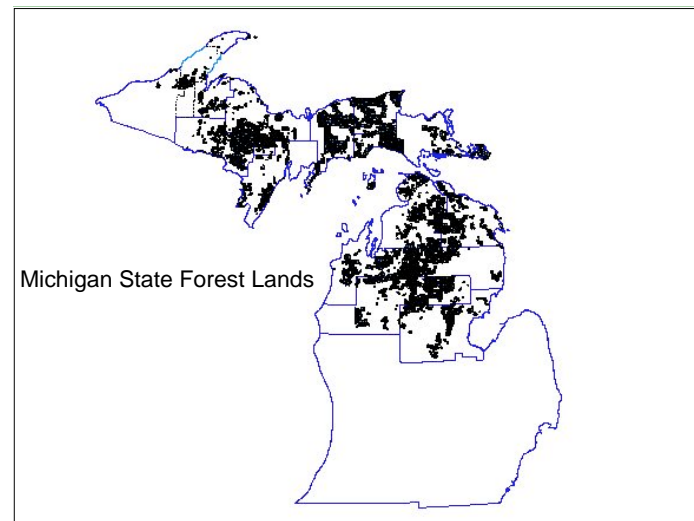
Mission of MDNR

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



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Forest Recreation Numbers in Michigan

There are:

- 29 million annual fishing days
- 2.4 million annual snowmobile days
- 4.2 million annual ORV days
- 18.4 million annual hunter days
- 2.8 million annual wildlife viewing days
 - Snowmobiling, ORV riding, and Wildlife Viewing are the only numbers that have grown over the past 10 years

State Priorities

- Resource Conservation
- Trails
- Community Outdoor Recreation
- Forest Recreation Infrastructure
- State Park Infrastructure
- Coordination and Communication

State's Actions for Public Access

- Offering Trust Fund grants to local governments
- Partnering with conservancies in the acquisition of easements and land
- Consolidating unusable state land and using profits to fund purchase of lands for public recreation
- Land exchanges

Snowmobile Trails

- *Key Points*
 - 60% of Snowmobile Trails in the U.P. are on private land; relying mainly on Corporate Lands.
 - There are 3,000 miles of snowmobile trail in the U.P. There are 6,200 miles statewide.
 - 58,133 snowmobiles traveled the Bill Nichols trail last winter. That is the highest total ever recorded.



Snowmobile Trails

- **More Facts**
 - Michigan has 309,995 registered snowmobilers. That ranks first in the nation
 - Our 6,200 miles of trail ranks us **ninth** in the nation behind New York, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Oregon, Vermont, Idaho, Maine, and New Hampshire
 - The snowmobile program is self-funding, it derives no money from the general fund
 - The average Snowmobiler:
 - Is 41 years old. 37% are 50 and older
 - Has household income of \$70,000
 - Spends \$4,000 per year on snowmobiling
 - Spend 7.2 nights per year in a motel while snowmobiling
 - Rides 990 miles per year
 - Over 1\$ billion in economic impact is generated by snowmobiling in Michigan
 - Over 6,455 full time jobs are created by snowmobiling in Michigan



Snowmobile Trails

- **The Future of Snowmobiling = Sno-Country By-Ways Conservancy**
 - A permanent trails program developed by the Michigan Snowmobile Association to enable clubs to purchase permanent easements for snowmobile trails
 - the mechanism for doing it has not yet been developed or agreed to
 - Once implemented, this program should save snowmobile clubs a lot of time and effort, eliminate constant reroutes, and enable businesses and communities to plan for the future with a secured trail in place

ORV Trails

- **Key Points**
 - Upper Peninsula ORV routes and trails are widely dispersed and not interconnected
 - All trails are on Federal or State lands
 - There are 305 miles of ORV trail in the West U.P. There are 3,000 miles statewide. 700 miles of this is motorcycle trail, not suitable for use by ATV's
 - The program is working on ways to meet the demands of the user group. The sport is growing fast
 - 5,000 ORV's traveled the Bill Nichols trail last summer. That number is increasing every year.



ORV Trails

- **Potential**
 - ORV sales in Michigan have outpaced snowmobile sales for the last several years
 - Many ORV riders are looking for a point to point trail riding experience similar to what is offered in the snowmobile program
 - There is a need to develop more ORV trail mileage to accommodate users
- **Struggles and Pitfalls**
 - The ORV user groups are not as well organized as snowmobilers. A statewide umbrella organization need development. Local groups need to get more involved



Hiking, Biking, Horseback Riding

- These numbers are hard to develop
- It is estimated that these numbers have increased over the last 10 years
- Many municipal groups and non-profits provide for this type of recreation
- Paddle sports are estimated to have seen a dramatic increase

Land Control – Acquisitions, Easements, etc

- **Funding**
 - Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund
 - Recreational Trails Program
 - Recreational Improvement Fund
 - MDOT Intermodal Enhancement Funds
 - ORV Grant Funds
 - Snowmobile Grant Funding
 - Foundations and advocacy organizations
- **What to do?**
 - Get involved
 - Grass roots, community driven projects are most successful
 - Don't sit back and wait
 - If you've got a project in mind, contact MDNR and then get community and legislator support



Trail Expansion and Development

- **Where and how?**
 - Work on connecting trails via Corporate lands and County roads
 - Coordinate acquisition of more rail-trails. Governor Granholm has recently made public comments about the importance of connecting Michigan communities via trails
 - Work together to develop projects
 - \$1,000,000 dollar Trust Fund grant recently received for the acquisition of Trailways in MI.



Thank you



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