



Michigan boasts the largest holding of public lands of any state east of the Mississippi. We also have one of the largest sporting populations in the region. With 756,000 hunters hitting the woods every fall and millions of people enjoying Michigan's waters, there is a large demand for public access to recreational lands and waters. For this reason, access has been one of MUCC's top priorities since its inception in 1937. Landowner disputes, privatization of Michigan's natural resources, and other emerging issues continue to threaten the ability of Michigan's sportsmen and women to access the out-of-doors.

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Access Pass

The burden of paying for state lands currently falls on hunters, anglers, and other recreational groups who are required to purchase licenses. Unless they are recreating within Michigan's State Parks or other lands that charge an upfront user fee, groups like bikers, hikers, berry-pickers, horseback riders and many other non-consumptive users are making use of a resource, but are not sharing in the management costs.

ACTION: Support the creation of a public access license which will be required to access state lands so as to allow all recreational users to share in the cost of management. **LEAD:** Donna Stine

Access for Sportsmen and Women with Disabilities

Accessibility to quality recreation opportunities in Michigan's great out-of-doors is one of MUCC's top priorities. This priority is extended to people of all physical abilities. Currently, laws and departmental orders exist to provide some limited support and opportunities for a subset of Michigan's citizens with disabilities.

However, MUCC believes that these regulations can be modified to allow access to more individuals having trouble pursuing their recreational interests because of a disability. The MDNR Hunter Recruitment and Retention Workgroup will contin-

ue to discuss actions for Michigan lawmakers and managers to help recruit and retain hunters and stem the annual loss of hunters within Michigan. Included in these discussions is how to better integrate hunters with disabilities into the outdoors.

ACTION: Support the passage of legislation that will address current barriers to allowing sportsmen and women with disabilities into the hunting/outdoor recreation community, while still allowing for adequate protection of our natural resources. **LEAD:** April Bennett

Crossbow Permits

MUCC has requested that the Natural Resources Commission engage a work group of diverse stakeholders to review and update the crossbow/modified bow permitting program to meet the increasing needs of bow hunters with disabilities. We will continue to be actively involved in this workgroup to ensure that Michigan will retain hunters through increasing accessibility opportunities.

ACTION: Support the passage of legislation based on the consensus recommendations of the 2008 Crossbow Disability Work Group to expand opportunities to hunters with temporary disabilities. **LEAD:** Amy Spray

MUCC ACCESS POLICY PRIORITIES

Hunt from A Standing Vehicle

MUCC as a member of the MDNR Accessibility Advisory Council is identifying specific programs and policies which will need to be created or modified to expand access to hunters with disabilities. Clarification of current disability definitions as well as the creation of increased outdoor motorized recreation opportunities will lead to increased access for those who are unable to recreate in Michigan's great out-of-doors by traditional means.

ACTION: Support the passage of legislation and departmental orders based on the consensus recommendations of the MDNR Accessibility Advisory Council to expand opportunities to hunters with disabilities and clarify Hunt from a Standing Vehicle permit criteria. **LEAD:** *April Bennett*

ACTION: Adopt new language in MDNR orders that clarifies that a personal assistive mobility device (i.e. power wheelchair) is not a "vehicle" and their use should be granted the same rights and access privileges as able bodied people, except for where it can be shown that their use could have an adverse impact on the environment. **LEAD:** *April Bennett*

RECENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- ▶ **Land Consolidation Process:** The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) is engaged in a process to prioritize the state land under their management authority and will sell, trade or transfer those lands deemed excess to their needs. A committee comprised of MUCC volunteers has reviewed all of the MDNR recommendations to ensure that they comply with MUCC's policy of retaining those lands with water access or state owned land forty acres in size or greater with public access. MUCC has submitted concerns about those lands which don't meet these criteria.
- ▶ **Increased access for hunters and anglers:** Through legislative initiatives, MUCC successfully defended the requirement that forests enrolled in the Commercial Forest Act must be open for hunting and fishing.
- ▶ **Crossbow Disability Work Group:** MUCC staff participated in discussions and supported the passage of departmental orders based on the consensus recommendations of the 2008 Crossbow Disability Work Group to expand opportunities to hunters with disabilities and clarify permit criteria. The recommendations mirrored the position of the organization as defined in a convention passed resolution.
- ▶ **Modified Bows:** Supported the passage of legislation that gave the authority to the Natural Resources Commission to issue modified bow permits for people with disabilities.