

Michigan has long been a sportsman's paradise, providing abundant, healthy and diverse wild game across the state. These game species are supported by Michigan's large tracts of forest lands, critical wetlands, inland lakes, miles of streams and rivers and other important habitats. Without these critical habitats the foundation for the hunting and fishing opportunities that bring billions of dollars into Michigan's economy every year and provide recreational opportunities and sustenance for Michigan's sportsmen and women is lost. The importance of habitat as the essential ingredient to healthy wildlife often gets lost in the shuffle as we talk about license fees, public access and management techniques. As Michigan's budget becomes tighter every year, the state's funding, and therefore its ability to manage our forests and waters, has declined. Michigan is developing its land at a rate eight times faster than our population is growing. This increasing rate of land development, which causes increased habitat fragmentation and parcelization, coupled with budgetary problems, ensures that Michigan's wildlife are fighting an uphill battle for space to live, eat and procreate.



LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Wildlife and Climate Change

Climate change may pose a serious threat to wildlife and our diverse habitats in Michigan, the United States, and around the world. Addressing the source of climate change is critical, but additional attention is needed to reduce the other stressors on wildlife habitats and ecosystems to help them adapt to this change. MUCC staff are serving on the Michigan Climate Action Council and its Technical Work Groups with a focus not only identifying ways Michigan can reduce its emissions of greenhouse gases, but also to ensure the state develops mitigation plans for climate change's potential impacts on wildlife.

ACTION: Support federal and state legislation that would provide significant funding for wildlife adaptation and habitat improvement measures to reduce the impact of climate change. **LEAD:** *Amy Spray*

ACTION: Support incorporation of relevant consensus recommendations from the Michigan Climate Action Council into the State Wildlife Action Plan. **LEAD:** *Amy Spray*

MUCC HABITAT POLICY PRIORITIES

Non-industrial Private Forestlands Coalition (NIPF)

MUCC will continue to work with non-Industrial private forests (NIPF) stakeholders to identify gaps in policy, education, programs and laws and to develop a strategic initiative to keep these lands available for forest production. In 2008, we received additional grant funding to work with the MDNR to support the creation and administration of a coalition to improve the management of NIPF. The coalition's mission is to increase cooperation between stakeholders; identify and focus on implementing pilot projects that will clarify points of entry for private landowners; and facilitate the provision of information and assistance to private landowners. The coalition is comprised of representatives of government, the forest industry, education and non-profits. This group will also provide a platform to address future USFS priorities, to meet the USFS state and private national themes, and regional and state assessments. Lead: Amy Spray

Strategic Plan for Deer Management

The management of Michigan's deer herd is under intense scrutiny by hunters, farmers, the timber industry, and the public in general. There is perhaps no wildlife issue that is receiving as much attention and conversation as the management of Michigan's deer herd among these diverse stakeholders. Limited staff resources and time, however, precludes the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) from administering extensive public engagement for the deer management planning process at this time.

ACTION: Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC) and the DNR have agreed to create a partnership to develop a robust public input process that will facilitate the creation of a strategic deer management plan. The public input process will be organized by MUCC and include a broad spectrum of stakeholders, while the DNR and other researchers will provide scientific support. LEAD: Amy Spray

RECENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- ▶ **Improving Habitat on State Lands:** Our state lands are a critical asset to maintaining healthy habitats and biodiversity within Michigan. MUCC is currently working with the DNR to roll out a hands-on volunteer habitat program that will help get our membership and other citizens out on state lands, doing projects that will improve habitat for all of Michigan's wildlife.
- ▶ **Non-Industrial Private Forestlands:** MUCC received a grant to pull together stakeholders interested in the future of Michigan's non-Industrial forest lands to identify gaps in policy, education, programs and laws and to develop a strategic initiative to keep these lands available for forest production.