



PROTECTING OUR PARKS AND PUBLIC LANDS

In Michigan, we have long understood the importance of vibrant parks and public lands to our economy and our way of life. Through the establishment of Michigan's park system and decades of conservation work, our state has become known as a destination to enjoy the outdoors. Today, Michigan is rich with pristine natural areas that enhance our quality of life and should be preserved and protected for future generations.

Increasing Ecological Resilience

While Michigan's forests, lakes, and coastlines are known for their recreational and commercial value, natural spaces also play a role in increasing local resilience to climate change. Not only do natural areas provide habitat for a wide range of species, which are necessary for ecological health, they also act as physical buffers against a host of environmental hazards like flood waters, severe heat, and air pollution. To maximize the benefits of natural spaces and aid climate change mitigation efforts, global environmental leaders have launched the 30x30 initiative which seeks to preserve 30% of our world's lands and 30% of our waters by 2030.

Recent Attacks on Public Lands

- In 2020, EGLE granted permits to a Toronto-based mining company seeking to build one of the nation's largest open-pit gold sulfide mines just 150 feet from the Menominee River in the Upper Peninsula. Sulfide mining has been linked to numerous incidents of water contamination across the country and would harm sacred tribal lands.
- The Michigan State House passed a bill in 2019 that would require forestry management funds to be spent only on the harvesting, reforesting, thinning, pest control, fertilization, and wildlife management of Michigan's forests.¹
- In 2019, there were attempts in both chambers of the legislature to allow local units to use protected sand dunes for parking lots and other local construction projects. This follows a 2018 bill which severely curtailed regulations protecting our state's wetlands.^{2 3}
- In 2017, the DNR approved exploratory drilling for copper in Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park. The mining company's exploration resulted in a muddy, eroded mess in the state park and likely violations of Michigan Natural Resources & Environmental Protection Act (NREPA).⁴

Recent Attacks on Public Lands (Cont.)

- In 2016, 33% of all Michigan motorists opted in to the Recreation Passport program, which funds Michigan parks through optional license plate fees. This program has increased funding for Michigan parks by over \$30 million.
- Michigan's park system still faces more than \$250 million in deferred capital improvement projects



Actions Needed To Protect Public Lands

- The Michigan Legislature must partner with the DNR to complete over \$250 million in deferred capital improvement projects in Michigan's state parks.
- The Michigan Legislature should mimic global conservation efforts by preserving of 30% of Michigan's lands and 30% of Michigan's water by 2030.
- The DNR should improve stewardship of existing public lands by acting on proposals to specifically designate some lands as natural, scenic, ecologically significant, or wilderness areas.
- The Michigan Legislature should not force the DNR to list large portions of Michigan's public lands as "surplus" and therefore eligible for sale.
- The DNR should prevent efforts to drill and mine under Michigan's state parks, including Hartwick Pines State Park and Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park

1 [https://www.legislature.mi.gov/\(S\(ojxkozfw0zyy12rdda1hep3j\)\)/mileg.aspx?page=getObject&objectName=2020-HB-5333](https://www.legislature.mi.gov/(S(ojxkozfw0zyy12rdda1hep3j))/mileg.aspx?page=getObject&objectName=2020-HB-5333)

2 [https://www.legislature.mi.gov/\(S\(ojxkozfw0zyy12rdda1hep3j\)\)/mileg.aspx?page=getObject&objectName=2019-HB-4267](https://www.legislature.mi.gov/(S(ojxkozfw0zyy12rdda1hep3j))/mileg.aspx?page=getObject&objectName=2019-HB-4267)

3 [https://www.legislature.mi.gov/\(S\(ojxkozfw0zyy12rdda1hep3j\)\)/mileg.aspx?page=getObject&objectName=2019-SB-0105](https://www.legislature.mi.gov/(S(ojxkozfw0zyy12rdda1hep3j))/mileg.aspx?page=getObject&objectName=2019-SB-0105)

4 <https://www.michigan.gov/som/0,4669,7-192-26847-404089--,00.html>



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