Vibrant parks and natural lands are essential to our economy and way of life in Michigan. 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.

Now it is up to our lawmakers to protect the natural resources we hold dear and use our natural lands to help foster a healthy relationship between our people and our planet:

**Michigan’s forests, lakes, and coastlines are not only known for their recreational and commercial value, but they also provide habitat for a wide range of wildlife. Protecting our parks and forested areas will enhance biodiversity at a time of international ecological collapse, improve and increase recreational opportunities, and bolster Michigan’s thriving tourism industry.**

**THE UNITED STATES LOSES A FOOTBALL FIELD OF NATURAL AREA EVERY 30 SECONDS.**
- Center for American Progress

**MICHIGAN’S RECREATIONAL ECONOMY EMPLOYS OVER 100,000 MICHIGANDERS.**
- Michigan Outdoor Industry Association

**MICHIGAN’S STATE PARKS RECEIVE OVER 35 MILLION VISITORS ANNUALLY (UP 30% SINCE 2019).**
- Michigan DNR
ENHANCING OUR WORKING AND DEVELOPED LANDS

Michigan’s working and developed lands have an important role to play in our natural environment. Utilized properly, agricultural lands, wetlands, and suburban greenspaces provide critical ecosystem services, act as physical buffers against a host of environmental hazards, and help lessen the impacts of climate change.

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**AN ANNUAL INCREASE OF 0.4% IN THE CARBON CONTENT OF AGRICULTURAL SOILS CAN BOOST CORN AND WHEAT PRODUCTION BY OVER 20% DURING THE NEXT 30 YEARS.**

— United Nations

**PLANTING TREES AND OTHER NATIVE VEGETATION IN URBAN AREAS LOWERS AVERAGE HEAT INDEXES BY UP TO 5 DEGREES FAHRENHEIT.**

— Environmental Protection Agency

**INSTALLING GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE CAN REDUCE THE NUMBER OF FLOODED MANHOLEs BY 15% IN SUBURBAN AND URBAN LANDSCAPES.**

— Environmental Protection Agency

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POLICIES TO IMPROVE OUR WORKING AND DEVELOPED LANDS:

1. **Incentivize regenerative farming practices** to increase crop yields, capture additional carbon from the atmosphere, and improve overall soil health and quality.

2. **Incorporate green infrastructure** in new MDOT projects, especially along heavily trafficked urban and suburban corridors.

3. **Fund local tree planting initiatives**, especially in dense urban centers that are more susceptible to the heat island effect.

4. **Redesign Michigan’s aggregate mining policy** to include aggregate recycling standards and science-based, ecologically informed mining and land restoration practices.

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POLICIES TO PROTECT OUR STATE PARKS AND PUBLIC LANDS:

1. **Robustly implement the global 30x30 initiative** to conserve and restore 30% of Michigan’s land and 30% of Michigan’s water by 2030. MI and local governments should acquire lands in the lower peninsula to provide all Michiganders with ‘nature nearby’, sink carbon and improve community climate resilience.

2. **Fully capitalize the State Parks Endowment Fund** to unlock several stable funding streams for the acquisition and maintenance of DNR properties (including the MNRTF).

3. **Designate more lands** as natural, scenic, ecologically significant, or wilderness areas to improve existing protections.