

## RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Michigan, the Great Lake State, is blessed with amazing natural resources. We have one of the largest publicly owned forests in the eastern half of the United States, more miles of freshwater coastline than any other state and the largest collection of freshwater sand dunes in the world.

Recognizing that natural resources form the heart of Michigan's reputation and \$26.6 billion recreational economy, Michigan Environmental Council seeks to protect, restore and promote these natural assets in partnership with community members, business leaders and experts. We must invest in our lands and create recreation opportunities for all in ways that manage potential conflicts. The wise management of our resources also requires us to protect against the damages of resource extraction and work to provide alternatives to using virgin resources. Michigan can attract a new generation of talent looking for places to live, work and play, and it can be a leader once again in protecting and managing our limited natural resources.

### **Public Lands**

Michigan's public lands are the calling card of our special Great Lakes brand and our unique quality of life, offering world-class places for hiking, mountain biking, hunting, fishing and countless other pursuits. These opportunities are a major part of our state's economy and put us in the big leagues with outdoor recreation powerhouse states like Colorado and Oregon. These public lands should be managed with long-term sustainability in mind. The state must continue to invest in new lands and trails. It must also improve recreational diversity to ensure that future generations can experience our Great Lakes outdoor lifestyle.



Michigan Environmental Council advocates for Michigan leaders to:

- Continue to elevate Michigan's profile as a place where people can live, work and play to attract new talent through the Office of Outdoor Recreation Industry.
- Invest in our state park system to address a large backlog of necessary maintenance and improvements in park facilities, water treatment systems, trails and pathways.
- Develop a land strategy that manages user conflict while elevating our public lands to allow for the highest quality recreation experience for all users.
- Protect our unique landscapes and habitats, such as coastal dunes.

### ***Metallic Mining and Carbon Extraction***

Long after historic copper production in the 1800s, and being a leader in iron ore production, the Upper Peninsula is now experiencing a new era of mining, targeting non-iron metals like copper, gold and zinc. In 2004, Michigan put in place rigorous standards and a public process for reviewing proposals for this type of mining due to the high risk of acid mine drainage and the pollution they posed. Unfortunately, the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy has failed to follow the law and several risky operations have either been permitted or are likely to be permitted. Moreover, the state's mining-friendly legislature continues to weaken the existing statute.

Michigan Environmental Council advocates for:

- Fighting legislative attempts to weaken our mining laws and, instead make the law stricter, more transparent and more protective of water resources.
- Monitoring and commenting on new and existing mine permits and operations that threaten the Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park and recreational destinations around Marquette.
- Pushing the Michigan Department of Natural Resources for more clarity in state-owned mineral ownership, clarity in surface rights and transparency in leasing state-owned minerals.
- Developing new funding sources for oversight of fossil fuel extraction, as current funding schemes rely on state general funds to cover the cost of oversight.

### ***Recycling and Materials Management***

Michigan was a long-time leader in recycling. Its bottle deposit law and curbside collection programs were among the first in the country. But after passing laws in response to a nationwide landfill space shortage in the early 1990s, Michigan has fallen behind other states. Those policies artificially decreased the cost of landfilling and have made it difficult for recycling and composting to compete. Recent legislation would move Michigan into a new paradigm: materials management.



Michigan Environmental Council advocates for:

- Working to modernize Michigan's bottle deposit laws by updating redemption and the escheats distribution and expanding the covered containers to account for products not envisioned when the program started.
- Implementing new legislation that creates a new paradigm for materials management and county planning.
- Maintaining funding for county planning and recycling infrastructure grants through the Renew Michigan Fund system.

#### **CONTACT**

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