

ACCOMPLISHMENTS REPORT



Michigan.gov/Forestry

2019 HIGHLIGHTS

Maintaining forests sustainably and responding to the future impacts of climate change were key goals for the DNR's Forest Resources Division (FRD) in 2019. Michigan's 3.85 million acres of state forest were re-certified as managed to a high standard by the Forest Stewardship Council® and the Sustainable Forestry Initiative®*. A new DNR team including FRD staff was formed to investigate projects such as selling credits for carbon sequestered in state forests and developing solar panel arrays on old mining sites and gravel pits.

Forestry staff prepared 55,021 acres of timber for sale with an estimated volume of 1,011,000 cords. They also sold 60,421 acres of timber at an estimated volume of nearly 1.2 million cords.

Work continued on the Forest Action Plan – a 10-year plan for all 20 million acres of public and private forests in Michigan – that included input from stakeholders ranging from the timber industry to the military and conservation groups. The division created a series of interactive story maps to showcase information about our state's forests and management.

FRD also continued outreach to inform people about sustainable forestry with a new tree-planting partnership with the Detroit Pistons and an expansion of its education campaign from metro Detroit to the Lansing and Grand Rapids markets.

PROTECTING OUR RESOURCES

Wet weather during the early season helped keep wildfire numbers low, with 318 wildfires burning 1,015 acres, down from 2018.

Staff conducted 92 prescribed burns covering more than 8,800 acres to improve wildlife habitat, reduce invasive species and help prevent future wildfires.

They also assisted with 23 out-of-state assignments in Alaska, Texas, Washington, Colorado and Ontario to fight fires, assist with logistics and conduct training exercises.

Additionally, staff partnered with the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Indian Affairs to celebrate Smokey Bear's 75th anniversary and bring wildfire prevention messages to Michigan.



Smokey Bear 75th anniversary event

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

Forest Legacy

The Forest Legacy program secured a \$1.5 million federal grant to acquire the nearly 600-acre Elk Forest at Black River property as part of the Pigeon River Country State Forest. It boasts more than a mile of Black River frontage in the heart of Michigan's elk country.

Forest Stewardship

Wheels to Woods: How do you instill a love of the forest in kids? Take them there! In the past four years, the Wheels to Woods program has helped get 41,651 kids, teachers and parents on forest field trips.

Stewardship plans: Michigan reached a milestone when Grossman Forestry completed its 1,000th Forest Stewardship Plan, the most of any company. Michigan relies on private sector foresters to develop plans for landowners.



Students learn about forest management on a field trip.

Urban and Community Forestry

The Urban and Community Forestry program helped 243 communities, home to 5 million people, with street tree inventories and management plans in 2019. It also supported:

- The Tree City program honoring support of healthy urban trees. In 2019, 122 Tree Cities, seven Tree Campuses, one Tree Line and one Tree Campus Healthcare USA were certified.
- Awards of \$80,500 in tree-planting grants to 36 communities and organizations with DTE Energy Foundation funds, resulting in more than 1,000 trees planted, 1,300 volunteer hours and an additional \$243,000 in local match.
- Efforts to secure \$175,000 to restore a historic urban sawmill on Belle Isle Park, Detroit.
- A boost to Michigan State University's UCF enrollment to 68 majors and 21 minors.

Forest Health

The forest health team aerially surveyed more than 25 million acres of land for insect damage, disease and other forest health issues.

Heterobasidion root disease: On the ground, nearly 850 acres of pine plantations entered for harvest in 2020 were surveyed for the disease.

Hemlock woolly adelgid: The DNR, Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Michigan State University, The Nature Conservancy, Alger Conservation District, USDA Forest Service, Ottawa County and local organizations partnered to seek and contain the invasive insect. Efforts included surveying more than 15,000 acres in 20 counties.

Oak wilt: Twenty-six oak wilt epicenters were treated with more than 20,000 feet of trench line, protecting hundreds of acres of high-value oak.

RESOURCE ASSESSMENT

Housed in FRD, the Resource Assessment Section (RAS) creates interactive maps and performs deep data dives for the DNR. During 2019, staff worked on:



A team of biologists attaches a radio collar to a fawn to collect data.

Digital mapping: Staff deployed a new stream-crossing inventory protocol using Esri's Geographic Information Technology (GIS) software, Survey123. Using Esri's Collector software, they developed a groundbreaking application for tracking fishing nets in the Great Lakes. This application was designed to work on smart devices used by the DNR Law Enforcement Division's Great Lakes Enforcement Unit.

Public-friendly applications: Made major updates to many DNR applications designed for the public, built and supported in the new GIS system, including: Family Friendly Fishing, Trout Trails and Deer Check.

Data tracking: With DNR Wildlife Division, RAS developed an innovative new toolset to process radio collar data collected from large animals. Another project was the development and launch of a new Capital Outlay Projects System to track \$13.5 million dollars in infrastructure upgrades.

PARTNERSHIPS

Big Tree Hunt: The Urban and Community Forestry program partnered with nonprofit ReLeaf Michigan to conduct the 2019 "Big Tree Hunt!" James Wegner found the biggest tree, a gigantic red oak in Osceola County measuring more than 32 feet around.



Partnerships and forest management helped the Kirtland's Warbler recover from the endangered species list.

Kirtland's Warbler recovery: After a decade of teamwork between the DNR, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and other partners, the Kirtland's Warbler was removed from the endangered species list with a healthy population of 2,300 pairs of tiny gray-and-yellow birds. The finicky, ground-nesting warbler requires large tracts of young jack pines; FRD manages forests to provide appropriate habitat.

Good Neighbor Authority: This program allows DNR forestry staff to assist with timber sales in Michigan's three national forests. In 2019, the DNR prepared 6,534 acres of timber for sale with an estimated volume of 105,000 cords valued at \$5.4 million.

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources Forest Resources Division is mainly funded by the Forest Development Fund, primarily made up of revenue from timber sales. The remainder of the budget is comprised of general funds, state restricted funds, federal funds, and donations from private entities.

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources is committed to the conservation, protection, management, use and enjoyment of the state's natural and cultural resources for current and future generations.

*The Forest Resources Division is certified under license codes FSC-C014912 and SFI-01796.