

MICHIGAN WILDLIFE COUNCIL
SEMIANNUAL REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE

Approved by the Chair of the Michigan Wildlife Council on April 27, 2020.

The following report is the eleventh semiannual report submitted to the Legislature documenting activities of the Michigan Wildlife Council (MWC).

As mandated by 2013 PA 246, the mission of the MWC is to develop and implement, in conjunction with a third-party marketing or advertising agency, a comprehensive media-based public information program to promote the essential role sportsmen and sportswomen play in furthering conservation via wildlife management and to educate the general public about hunting, fishing, and the taking of game. Scientific wildlife management practices are essential for maintaining healthy ecosystems across the state, and these activities receive most of their funding from the sale of hunting and fishing licenses and the equipment used to participate in these activities. The mission is funded by a \$1 surcharge on all Michigan base hunting and fishing licenses.

The MWC has contracted with Gŭd Marketing of Lansing to develop and implement the marketing campaign. Extensive research and a baseline survey conducted in 2015 were used by the MWC and Gŭd Marketing to identify the campaign slogan, "Here. for Generations." as the umbrella for the Council's initial work.

The 2015 baseline survey data showed general, strong support for hunting and fishing throughout the state, but the knowledge about the benefits and importance of hunting and fishing was limited. In addition, there was confusion by Michigan residents, including hunters and anglers, about wildlife management—why it's necessary, the activities that make it up, how it's funded, and its benefits to everyone. The effectiveness of this campaign is measured through an annual statewide survey.

Results of the annual survey, which was completed during the fall of 2019, showed positive results.

- 1. Continued high support of hunting (83%) and fishing (86%)**
- 2. Half of the state recognizes that wildlife management by humans is necessary;** a significant increase from the 39% who agreed in 2015, but there's still work to be done in educating select audiences on its necessity for thriving wildlife populations.
- 3. Greater understanding that hunting and fishing licenses are the largest source of funding for wildlife management;** 73% know that hunting and fishing license fees are the largest funding source for wildlife management work.
- 4. Increased awareness of the economic impact provided by hunting, fishing, and license dollars**
 - a. More than 3 in 4 residents believe hunting and fishing contribute significantly to the Michigan economy.
 - b. More than 2 in 3 people say the industry creates a significant number of jobs.
- 5. Number of respondents who agree that hunting and fishing are an important part of Michigan's culture and heritage reached a campaign high.**

Güd Marketing continues to employ a wide variety of methods to distribute information to the target audience for the “Here. For Generations.” campaign. These include more traditional messaging efforts such as roadside billboards, television commercials, newspaper and magazine articles, and TV and radio interviews. Newer methods include side-street billboards, bike-share signage, and social media digital ads through Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

From June 8, 2019 through December 31, 2019, the campaign generated over 235,157,034 impressions and 4,017,099 engagements (clicks to websites, likes, shares, videos, and views). Stories focused on specific species outperformed conservation-focused stories for audience engagement an average of two-to-one. “Conservation Funding Quiz: How MI pays for natural resource management,” earned the highest performance metrics of all content marketing published during this time frame.

During the 2019 deer hunting season, articles and media activities focused on hunters and hunting. Increased paid and earned media efforts intensified interest on this subject from new people. Nearly 90 percent of website sessions during this time frame were from new users to the site. The top three cities for website visitors during this time were the most densely populated cities of neutral and moderately approving audience members: Detroit, Grand Rapids, and Ann Arbor.

One media event proved highly effective. Prior to the start of the firearms deer season, a media release highlighting the achievement of the Michigan Sportsman Against Hunger campaign and the record-breaking donation of venison to food banks and food kitchens received unprecedented coverage. This release generated more than 100 stories in print, radio, TV, and online. The exposure went nationwide with stories appearing from California to Georgia. The interest in this story continued well after the close of the firearms deer season and generated positive publicity for the hunting community.

Multiple levels of messaging and outreach activities were executed during this time frame, including billboards, digital video streaming, digital music streaming, paid social media advertising on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, content articles, media interviews, and multiple digital video and display advertisements across all devices (desktop, tablet, mobile). During this time frame, the “value add”—the additional monetary value of free media added above the actual purchased—is estimated to be \$238,536. This provided the MWC an additional 48 percent value over the paid media.

The MWC website (which was redesigned and relaunched in May 2019) continues to perform well with over 100,000 page views during the last six months. Eighty-six percent were first time visitors. Three-quarters of the website visitors accessed the site using a mobile device.

The Michigan Historical Center held an event to unveil Michigan's restored wildlife species photo mosaics on January 30, 2020. These mosaics were developed in conjunction with several events across the state in 2019. Leaders of organizations and individuals recognized as significant partners in the restoration of these species were invited to participate in the unveiling. This event spurred a great deal of media activity (see Michigan Wildlife Council Media Appearances and Media Interviews).

The MWC continues to seek ongoing opportunities to keep stakeholders, legislators, and the public informed of its progress. Attached is the schedule of media appearances and articles organized by Güd Marketing.

The current council includes:

Matt Pedigo (Chair), Howell
Carol Rose, Hillman
Ed Roy, Traverse City
Hank Stancato, Detroit
Kristin Phillips (Treasurer, DNR director's designee)
Jeff Poet, Clare
Beth Gruden, Perrinton
Nick Buggia, Mayville
Jim Hammill, Crystal Falls

As of April 10, 2020, the MWC has ceased all expenditures and activities in accordance with the Governor's Executive Directive 2020-3, issued March 30, due to COVID-19 restricting State discretionary expenditures to those identified in the Directive. Activities related to the MWC did not meet the criteria of the Governor's order. G&D Marketing was directed to halt contract activities. The media campaign that was scheduled to begin May 2020 was paused, and activities will be renewed as appropriate when restrictions are lifted.

The MWC appreciates the Legislature's continued support and the opportunity to report on its activities since November 2019.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "MATT PEDIGO". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Matt Pedigo, Chair
Michigan Wildlife Council

In compliance with Section 43532b(18)(b) of PA 246 of 2013, the Michigan Wildlife Council provides the following summary of Fiscal Year 2019 expenditures for the Michigan Wildlife Management Public Education Subaccount that was created within the Game and Fish Protection Account.

Fiscal Year 2019 Expenditures for the Michigan Wildlife Council
(October 1, 2018 thru September 30, 2019)

Expenditure Description	Amount
Research/Marketing/Creative/Media	\$1,844,100
<u>Administrative</u>	<u>3,000</u>
Total Expenditures	\$1,847,100

Michigan Wildlife Council Media Appearances

October 2019 – March 2020

Content Marketing Articles

[Magnificent Moose: The comeback story of Michigan's Upper Peninsula Herd](#)

Detroit Free Press
October 8, 2019

[Magnificent Moose: The comeback story of Michigan's Upper Peninsula Herd](#)

The Rapidian
October 8, 2019

[Magnificent Moose: The comeback story of Michigan's Upper Peninsula Herd](#)

Detroit News
October 8, 2019

[It takes a village: How Michigan conservation groups work together to benefit wildlife](#)

Detroit Free Press
October 30, 2019

[It takes a village: How Michigan conservation groups work together to benefit wildlife](#)

Detroit News
October 30, 2019

[It takes a village: How Michigan conservation groups work together to benefit wildlife](#)

The Rapidian
October 30, 2019

[Deer hunters' impact on the state extends far beyond Michigan's fields and woods](#)

Detroit News
November 15, 2019

[Deer hunters' impact on the state extends far beyond Michigan's fields and woods](#)

Detroit Free Press
November 15, 2019

[Deer hunters' impact on the state extends far beyond Michigan's fields and woods](#)

The Rapidian
November 15, 2019

[Deer hunters' impact on the state extends far beyond Michigan's fields and woods](#)

Detroit Free Press
November 15, 2019

[Deer hunters' impact on the state extends far beyond Michigan's fields and woods](#)

Detroit News
November 26, 2019

[Snowy owls' winter arrival is highly anticipated in Michigan](#)

Detroit Free Press
December 3, 2019

[Surviving in winter: How these remarkable Michigan animals make it to spring](#)

Detroit Free Press
December 17, 2019

[Surviving in winter: How these remarkable Michigan animals make it to spring](#)

Detroit News
December 17, 2019

[Need a do-over on your 2020 New Year's resolution? Try forest bathing](#)

Detroit Free Press
January 17, 2020

[Need a do-over on your 2020 New Year's resolution? Try forest bathing](#)

Detroit News
January 17, 2020

[Wildlife Photo Mosaics celebrate Michigan's conservation success stories](#)

Detroit Free Press
February 26, 2020

[Wildlife Photo Mosaics celebrate Michigan's conservation success stories](#)

Detroit News
February 26, 2020

[Wetlands royalty: Meet the wood duck, Michigan's regal-looking waterfowl](#)

The Detroit News
September 24, 2019

[Wetlands royalty: Meet the wood duck, Michigan's regal-looking waterfowl](#)

The Rapidian
September 24, 2019

Media Interviews (Videos)

[On the water with Fly Girls of Michigan](#)

FOX17 – “Where in the Wild”
October 15, 2019

[How is Michigan keeping wetlands, habitats protected?](#)

WDIV – “ClickonDetroit”
November 4, 2019

[What you can do to help conserve the bat population in Michigan](#)

FOX17 – “Where in the Wild”
November 12, 2019

[Ducks Unlimited transforms Kent County Park](#)

WOOD-TV – “eightWest”
November 18, 2019

[Michigan woman completes resolution to hike 52 nature trails in one year](#)

FOX17 – “Where in the Wild”
January 7, 2020

[This trailblazer will inspire you to get outdoors](#)

WDIV – “Live in the D”
January 9, 2020

[New mosaic exhibition highlights conservation success stories](#)

FOX17 – “Where in the Wild”
February 11, 2020

[Archery and Wildlife Conservation](#)

FOX17 – “Where in the Wild”
March 17, 2020