



Natural Resources

General Overview

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) was re-established in 2011 following the issuance of Executive Order (E.O.) 2011-1 which separated the DNR from the former Department of Natural Resources and Environment (DNRE). E.O. 2011-1 effectively undid E.O. 2009-45, which had created the DNRE by combining the DNR with the Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE), formerly the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). The current DNR and EGLE have existed separately and been combined throughout their respective histories; from 1995 through 2009, and 2011 to the present they have been separate, the remainder of the time they have been combined.

Currently the DNR has 2,509.2 appropriated (full-time equated) FTE positions, many of which are located in Lansing, with the balance spread throughout the regional and district offices throughout the State.

Major Divisions and Programs

Natural Resources Commission. The Commission advises the DNR Director on natural resources issues and also has the authority to set rules on hunting and fishing. Authority to name species as game, which had formerly been exclusively reserved for the Legislature, was given to the Commission by Public Act 21 of 2013. Under current law, either the Commission or the Legislature may name a species as game, but only the Legislature may remove a species from the list.

Fisheries Division. This division protects and enhances populations and habitat of fishes and other forms of aquatic life. One of the major tasks for the Fisheries Division is to conduct research on fish populations and operate six fish hatcheries. The choice of which species to raise at the hatcheries is based on the Division's research with the goal of promoting healthy fish populations and benefitting the Great Lakes. Nearly all of the funding for the Fisheries Division comes from hunting and fishing license sales and Federal grants.

Forest Resources Division. This division protects and manages the use of a healthy forest resource base for social, recreational, environmental, and economic benefits and promotes the responsible leasing of State-owned mineral resources. Some of the major tasks undertaken by the Forest Resources Division are the management of State forests and marking for timber auctions, conducting gas and oil lease auctions, and wildfire protection. The largest fund source for the Division is the Forest Development Fund, which receives revenue from timber sales. The State General Fund and various Federal grants make up most of the rest of the funding the Division receives.

Law Enforcement. This division enforces Michigan natural resources and environmental laws, and also provides safety education programs. All of the DNR's conservation officers are employed through this area of the Department, and are assigned throughout the State.

Parks and Recreation Division. This division designs, develops, and manages Michigan's State parks, recreation areas, and boating facilities. Management of Michigan's State parks is the largest program in the Division, and is funded primarily from user fees received from visitors to State parks and gas and oil lease and royalty revenue through the State Parks Endowment Fund. Recreational Boating is the next-largest program area in the Division, and it receives its funding through boat registrations and part of a 2% carve-out on taxes on motor fuels.

Wildlife Division. This division enhances, restores, and conserves the State's wildlife resources, natural communities, and ecosystems. The Wildlife Division engages in habitat improvement, wildlife research, and other activities. Most of the funding for the Wildlife Division comes from Federal grants as well as hunting and fishing license revenue.

Michigan Historical Program. This program area was transferred to the DNR with Executive Order 2009-36 which abolished the Department of History, Arts, and Libraries. The programs currently administered by the DNR as a part of this reorganization effort include: the Michigan Historical Museum, Mackinac Island State Park, and several other programs.