

MICHIGAN WILDLIFE COUNCIL
SEMIANNUAL REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE
Approved by the Chair of the Michigan Wildlife Council on April 30, 2019

The following report is the ninth 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 one-dollar surcharge on all Michigan base hunting and fishing licenses.

The MWC has contracted with GÜD 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 GÜD 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.

To improve understanding and support, the “Here for Generations” campaign was launched in the spring of 2016. The effectiveness of this campaign is measured through a statewide survey every year. The most recent survey was conducted in September 2018 and an analysis identified five key findings:

- 1. Approval of hunting and fishing remains high in every region**
Eighty percent of the survey respondents approve of hunting, while the support for fishing sits slightly higher at 82%.
- 2. Campaign recall numbers are solid**
Twenty-five percent of the survey respondents recall seeing the campaign in some fashion.
- 3. Significant progress has been made in respondents’ understanding of wildlife management**
There has been a 33% increase statewide in the belief that wildlife management by humans is necessary.
- 4. Interest in messages about funding for wildlife management and natural resources is growing**
Since the initial survey, there has been a 45% increase in the number of respondents who acknowledge that hunting and fishing license dollars pay for wildlife management and habitat preservation.

5. There continues to be confusion about funding for wildlife management and natural resources

While there is interest in learning about how wildlife management is funded, there is still misunderstanding about that topic. Since the initial survey, a significant portion of respondents have been willing to accept both that wildlife management is funded by everyone through tax dollars AND that hunting, and fishing licenses are the largest sources of funding for the work. Messaging aimed at affecting these beliefs had only been offered for 4 months prior to the 2018 survey. This messaging will continue and will be enhanced with the expectation that these beliefs can be changed prior to the next survey.

The “Here for Generations” campaign uses a wide variety of methods to distribute information to the public. These include more traditional messaging efforts such as roadside billboard placements, television commercials, newspaper and magazine articles, and TV and radio interviews. GÜD Marketing also employs advertising on social media platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram and YouTube. Other forms of new media include digital display advertising and online pre-roll video placements. Plans are underway to update the MWC website with an estimated launch in Spring 2019.

Online bulletin board focus groups were conducted amongst key target audience groups in January to guide development of spring campaign creative materials. Results from those focus groups showed that audiences had a great interest in wildlife management and its funding – responding well to solid facts such as “hunting and fishing licenses provide \$62 million for wildlife management.” The participants responded less favorably to campaign materials which specifically showed hunters and anglers, as they were not as able to see themselves in the advertising, stating that they “couldn’t relate” to the people shown in the ads.

From June 8, 2018 through December 31, 2018, the campaign generated over 224,628,386 impressions and 1,844,224 engagements (clicks to websites, likes, shares, videos and views). The campaign continued steady market presence from January through April 2019, including paid social media advertising on Facebook and Instagram, content articles and media interviews, and online digital video streaming advertisements. During that timeframe, “value add”—the additional monetary value of free media added above the actual purchases—was estimated to be around \$405,000. This provided the Michigan Wildlife Council thirty-five percent more advertising than what was purchased.

With the onset of warmer weather and a new fishing season, marketing efforts and media presence will increase from May through September 2019. This media strategy ensures that the campaign is reaching audiences while they are enjoying outdoor recreation activities. Furthermore, during this time, target audience members will receive advertising based on their individual behavior and actions. Promotions will include billboards, television spots, digital display, and advertising on Pandora, in addition to paid social media advertising, content articles and media interviews and online digital video streaming advertisements.

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

Jim Hammill, Crystal Falls

Beth Gruden, Perrinton

Nick Buggia, Mayville

The existing marketing contract is set to expire early 2020 and the MWC is working with the state and beginning the purchasing process to request bids for a new contract later this year.

The MWC appreciates the Legislature's continued support and the opportunity to report on its activities since October 2018.

Respectfully,

MICHIGAN WILDLIFE COUNCIL

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

Matt Pedigo, Chair

Attachments

In compliance with Section 43532b(18)(b) of PA 246 of 2013, the MWC 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 10/1/2018-3/31/2019

Expenditure Description	Amount
Research/Marketing/Creative/Media	\$329,400
Administrative	<u>600</u>
Total Expenditures	\$330,000

**Michigan Wildlife Council Media Appearances
(October 2018 – March 2019)**

[Efforts to remove invasive species](#)

Fox17 – Where in the Wild
October 16, 2018

[Bats in the D](#)

WDIV – Live in the D
October 23, 2018

[Protecting and maintaining Michigan's waterways](#)

WOODTV – eightWest
November 2, 2018

[Wild Turkey are making a comeback in the D](#)

WDIV – Live in the D
November 2, 2018

[New restoration project in Fennville helps wildlife thrive](#)

FOX17 - Where in the Wild
November 13, 2018

[Celebrate Thanksgiving with a turkey conservation lesson](#)

WZZM – The Exchange
November 15, 2018

[Beautiful birds you can see this winter](#)

WDIV – Live in the D
December 10, 2018

[Celebrating the 100th anniversary of elk](#)

FOX17 – Where in the Wild
December 11, 2018

[Keeping our trees safe from invasive species](#)

WOODTV – eightWest
December 18, 2018

[Protecting the snowy owl](#)

WOODTV – eightWest
February 22, 2019

Michigan Wildlife Council Published Articles
(October 2018 – March 2019)

[Splendor in Michigan grasslands](#)

Detroit Free Press
October 9, 2018

[Splendor in Michigan grasslands](#)

Detroit News
October 9, 2018

[Flight club: Singing the praises - and dispelling the myths - of Michigan bats](#)

Detroit Free Press
October 17, 2018

[Flight club: Singing the praises - and dispelling the myths - of Michigan bats](#)

Detroit News
October 17, 2018

[Flight club: Singing the praises - and dispelling the myths - of Michigan bats](#)

The Rapidian
October 17, 2018

[Test your Michigan hunting knowledge](#)

Detroit Free Press
November 7, 2018

[Test your Michigan hunting knowledge](#)

Detroit News
November 7, 2018

[Continuing the conservation of Michigan's wildlife](#)

Detroit Free Press
November 13, 2018

[Continuing the conservation of Michigan's wildlife](#)

Detroit News
November 13, 2018

[Continuing the conservation of Michigan's wildlife](#)

The Rapidian
November 13, 2018

[A two-for-one deal: Volunteers help improve 'rabbitat'](#)

Detroit News
December 5, 2018

[A two-for-one deal: Volunteers help improve 'rabbitat'](#)

The Rapidian
December 5, 2018

[Bear essentials: Conservation boosts Michigan's black bear population](#)

Detroit Free Press
December 13, 2018

[Bear essentials: Conservation boosts Michigan's black bear population](#)

Detroit News
December 13, 2018

[Bear essentials: Conservation boosts Michigan's black bear population](#)

The Rapidian
December 13, 2018

[Winter is a hot time for bird-watching in Southeast Michigan](#)

Detroit Free Press
January 22, 2019

[Winter is a hot time for bird-watching in Southeast Michigan](#)

Detroit News
January 22, 2019

[5 uniquely cool ways to have fun in Michigan this winter](#)

Detroit Free Press
February 12, 2019

[5 uniquely cool ways to have fun in Michigan this winter](#)

Detroit News
February 12, 2019

[5 uniquely cool ways to have fun in Michigan this winter](#)

The Rapidian
February 12, 2019