

MICHIGAN WILDLIFE COUNCIL
SEMIANNUAL REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE
Public Act 451 of 1994, Section 43532b(18)(b)

Approved by the Chair of the Michigan Wildlife Council on November 4, 2022.

The following is the semiannual report submitted to the Legislature documenting activities of the Michigan Wildlife Council (MWC or Council) for the second half of fiscal year (FY) 2022.

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 public information program to promote the essential role sportsmen and sportswomen play in furthering conservation and educating the public that:

- Wildlife needs to be managed by people to thrive.
- Fishing and hunting are the primary source of funding for wildlife management.
- Fishing and hunting are important to our economy, jobs and culture.

The mission is funded by a \$1 surcharge on all Michigan base hunting and fishing licenses.

Hunting and fishing are significant to Michigan's fiscal stability. Combined, they generate \$11.2 billion for Michigan's economy every year and support 171,000 jobs, according to a [2019 study](#) released by the Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC) in partnership with Michigan State University. In every region of the state, the number of positions created and supported by hunting and fishing puts the industry in the top 10 percent of job-creation industries. In addition, the industry contributes \$3.3 billion in salaries and wages to Michigan households and has a \$7.2 billion value-add to the state's gross domestic product. In addition, hunting and fishing licenses provided over \$65 million for wildlife conservation throughout Michigan.

The MWC has contracted with Gŭd Marketing of Lansing to develop and implement a marketing campaign. The campaign commenced in June 2016 and continued through FY 2022.

The latest statewide survey of 800 participants was conducted in December 2021 - January 2022, and it indicated:

- 90 percent of respondents believe hunting and fishing are an important part of Michigan's culture and heritage, which was a campaign high.
- Nearly 3 in 4 people said the industry creates a significant number of jobs.
- 80 percent of respondents believe hunting and fishing contribute significantly to the Michigan economy.
- 69 percent of respondents recognize that wildlife management by humans is necessary, a significant increase from the 39 percent who agreed in 2015.

Furthermore, the Council used virtual focus groups (conducted in December 2021) to measure how well the current campaign is received by targeted audiences. This qualitative study included adult residents of suburban and urban Wayne, Oakland, and Macomb counties. There were 5 - 7 people per focus group.

Focus group discussions revealed:

- The campaign's spokeswoman's energy and enthusiasm helped to make the ads engaging.
- The lighthearted and humorous nature of the ads drew positive reaction.

- Hunting and fishing dollars as the largest funding source for wildlife management is still surprising to southeast Michigan residents.
- Economic impact messaging continues to be broadly appealing.
- Population control emerged as a more consistent reason to support hunting than in previous years.
- There is opportunity for a stronger call to action, to showcase more outdoor spaces, and speak to more conservation experts.

Building on the campaign’s success, MWC’s summer paid marketing campaign ran from May 23 through September 30, 2022. Introduced in 2021, the campaign continued to feature spokeswoman Annette (a fictitious character) to connect with people and emphasize that hunting and fishing benefits all Michiganders. Annette is lighthearted and humorous, while delivering direct messages. Annette likes fishing and hunting and is a great benefit to the campaign, because she also posts to social media her own opinions on hunting and fishing, which are positive and personal. Media tactics used with this campaign include digital video, digital display, paid social media, content marketing, and social influencers.

The completed creative from the summer campaign (May - August 2022) included billboards, bus ads, social media stories, a 30-second TV spot, and a 30-second radio spot. There were 13 billboards used in southeast Michigan with 3 different messages. They overlapped with the 60 bus tails that had 4 different messages. The bus routes were along the same roads as the billboards.

The summer campaign included highlights from the Free Fishing Weekend in June and Wildlife Conservation Month in July. Specific tactics included promotion of a content video in partnership with the [Michigan Chronicle](#), execution of a photo contest, and implementation of experiential activities to go deeper during key time periods with “Conservation Takes Flight.” Activations took place at Belle Isle and Stoney Creek Metro Park during high traffic events.

Furthermore, multiple social media influencers were enlisted to authentically reach specific audiences through Facebook and Instagram. The social influencers allowed the campaign to make more genuine connections, which was evidenced by the viewer comments on the posts.

The Council continued to partner with media that reached hunters and anglers to deliver key messages. The Mike Avery Radio affiliation included monthly interviews, social media posts, and weekly radio spots. In addition, the Council teamed up with MUCC and the Michigan Out-of-Doors Magazine, including to create a featured article and print ad in every issue. Additionally, the Council joined with MUCC to publish content in TRACKS Magazine, a publication which highlights habitats, ecology, ecosystems, and conservation in Michigan and is delivered to select elementary and middle schools.

From May 1 through October 30, 2022, the campaign generated over 60,955,022 impressions and 2,453,402 engagements (clicks to websites, likes, shares, videos, and views). Total value added (free media placement) for the summer campaign was \$178,713.

In addition, the marketing campaign won several awards during FY 2022 for work completed in 2021:

- PACE Awards – Pinnacle Award – Feature Stories
- PACE Awards – Pinnacle Award – Video Program
- American Advertising Federation ADDY Award – District Gold
- American Advertising Federation ADDY Award – District Judge’s Choice

The MWC will conduct a fall 2022 campaign to highlight the benefits of hunting during a time when it is top of mind for audiences less connected to hunting. Another statewide survey to measure campaign progress will be fielded in December 2022.

To learn more about conservation efforts in Michigan, including how they benefit from hunting and fishing, visit the Michigan Wildlife Council at [HereForMiOutdoors.org](https://www.hereformioutdoors.org).

The current council includes:

Nick Buggia, (Chair) Adrian
Jason Garvon, Brimley
Ed Roy, Traverse City
Sarah Topp, Wallace
Kristin Phillips (Treasurer, DNR director's designee)
Brent Pike, Grand Haven
Beth Gruden, Perrinton
T. Elliot Shafer, Grosse Pointe Woods
Franklin Hayes, West Bloomfield

The MWC appreciates the Legislature's continued support and the opportunity to report on its activities since May 2022.

Respectfully,



Nicholas Buggia, Chair
Michigan Wildlife Council

In compliance with Section 43532b(18)(b) of PA 451 of 1994, the Michigan Wildlife Council provides the following summary of FY 2022 expenditures for the Michigan Wildlife Management Public Education Subaccount that was created within the Game and Fish Protection Account.

Fiscal Year 2022 Expenditures for the Michigan Wildlife Council
(April 1, 2022 through September 30, 2022)

Expenditure Description	Amount
Research/Marketing/Creative/Media	\$1,663,903
<u>Administrative</u>	<u>2,992</u>
Total Expenditures	\$1,666,895

Michigan Wildlife Council Media Appearances

May 2022 – October 2022

Media Articles

[From experienced to beginner, Detroit is a great place to fish](#), Detroit Free Press, May 31, 2022

[Hunting and Fishing Dollars at Work](#), Michigan Out-of-Doors Magazine, June 2022

[Michigan Wildlife Conversation Month](#), July 2022