

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 (MWC) on December 8, 2025.

The following is the semiannual report to be submitted to the Legislature documenting activities of the MWC for the second half of fiscal year 2025.

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 through wildlife management and to educate the public about hunting, fishing and the taking of game. This includes helping the public understand that hunting and fishing are:

- Necessary for conservation and funding the management of Michigan's natural resources.
- A valued and integral part of the cultural heritage of this state.
- An important part of the state's economy.

The work of the MWC is funded by a \$1 surcharge on all Michigan base hunting and fishing licenses.

The MWC was contracted with Gud Marketing and then Fusion92 to develop and implement the organization's marketing campaign through this reporting period. A baseline survey of Michigan's residents conducted in 2015 and was used to set the foundation for the marketing campaign in terms of identifying the appropriate audience, determining the language that would connect most effectively with that audience and determining the tactics that would prove to be the most effective to reach that audience. Each year since that initial survey, a subsequent survey has been used to measure changes in attitudes, opinions and understanding of the value hunters and anglers bring to conservation efforts in Michigan. Those findings help the council refine messaging and tactics for the following year.

The annual study was conducted again in December of 2024 by Responsive Management, an independent research firm specializing in natural resource and outdoor recreation issues in 50 states and 15 countries around the world. The study was tuned to determine Michigan residents' participation in and attitudes toward hunting, fishing and the taking of game, as well as their understanding of and support for the state's management of wildlife and natural resources. Survey questions were developed cooperatively by the MWC, Gud Marketing and Responsive Management.

Results of this work and other independent research conducted by Gud Marketing shows three quarters of Michigan residents (77%) approve of legal, regulated hunting, and 83% approve of legal, regulated fishing. Approval for the taking of fur-bearing animals is much lower, with 46% approving of legal, regulated trapping. These results show approval of hunting and fishing remaining largely unchanged year over year, unlike national surveys that indicate a slide in approval for hunting and fishing. Michigan is standing out as the only state in the nation where attitudes and perceptions around

hunting and fishing are remaining stable or improving.

The second half of FY24 marked a period of transition, as the contract for marketing services shifted from Gud Marketing to Fusion92. Gud Marketing fulfilled their contractual obligations on June 7, 2025, when they reported the results of the council's spring campaign.

The spring campaign developed by Gúd and approved by the MWC used existing creative content for the purpose of remaining relevant and active for those following or linked to our work. The approved plan included a continuous organic social media campaign, quarterly newsletters and paid media through Mike Avery Outdoors that began in October and ended with the contract on June 7. Gúd used repurposed creative content to manage a \$215,000 investment in streaming television placements (37%), streaming audio (28%), broadcast television/cable placements (17%), paid social media (14%) and Mike Avery (4%).

The results of this campaign period were as follows: 1.7 million impressions using streaming television placements on ESPN, Disney+, Hulu, Hulu Interactive, and Detroit DMA. The streaming audio placements gathered 2.5 million impressions and the broadcast TV another 636 thousand impressions. The paid social media effort resulted in 7.4 million impressions with 21 thousand web clicks and 445 thousand video completions.

The newsletter also caught a lot of attention through this campaign period. There was a 40% open rate and over 100+clicks from the newsletter going right into the website. The campaign gathered another 50 new newsletter sign-ups and 14,700 new website viewers. From google analytics, we learned that 95% of traffic came directly from the campaign.

While Gud Marketing was wrapping up the spring campaign, Fusion92 was busy preparing the summer-fall 2025 "Protecting Michigan's Legacy" campaign. The campaign approved by the council was chosen from three creative concepts presented, along with the results of focus group testing and additional research on April 10, 2025.

The "Protecting Michigan's Legacy" campaign was built on the research completed by Responsive Management in December of 2024 and earlier work to understand the perceptions the people of Michigan have about hunting, fishing and trapping. The core audience remained similar to past campaigns, focusing on Michigan cities and suburbs with a demographic age between 18-44. Fusion92 also recommended an extended reach to "outdoor enthusiasts" who enjoy nature-based activities, but do not hunt, fish or trap. A third audience was also identified as hunters, anglers and trappers that might share the message of the MWC with friends, colleagues and others.

The campaign was developed around the following general statement: "License fees from hunting and fishing contribute over \$63 million to Michigan wildlife conservation. These quiet conservationists play a crucial role in monitoring and maintaining fish and wildlife populations, ensuring a healthy balance in nature and protecting Michigan's Legacy".

The campaign tactics were to focus primarily on paid and earned social media using Meta platform (primarily Facebook and Instagram) and Snapchat with a target of 11.2

million impressions. Content would showcase real-world efforts and successes in protecting Michigan's wildlife and natural habitats, inform and inspire the public about wildlife management and conservation science, and generally build an understanding and appreciation for the hunters and anglers that are the primary funding source for conservation in Michigan.

Additional tactics used to reach our primary audience include streaming TV placements on Paramount +, Hulu, and Peacock as well as streaming video placements on the Weather Channel, Local 4, and Pitchfork. The goal for these planned tactics is to reach 16.7 million impressions.

The campaign's secondary audience is reached using a combination of the tactics above and outdoor advertising along six of the most heavily traveled corridors between Michigan's urban centers and northern Michigan.

The campaign is reaching Michigan's hunting and fishing community through media placements with Mike Avery radio, personal and supported engagements by council members at hunting and fishing events around the state, and organic social media content.

The campaign went into market in August 2025 and was completed in mid-November. Earned social, web content, and newsletter placements will continue throughout the year. Summer / Fall results will be reported to the MWC at an upcoming February meeting.

Additional information on the MWC can be found by visiting the [MWC website](#).

Current council members include:

Jason Garvon (chair), Brimley
Damion Frasier, Chesaning
Beth Gruden, Perrinton
Franklin Hayes, Detroit
Dawn Levey, Elsie
Daniel Ulfig, Redford
Daniel Cooke, Milford
Jon Spieles (treasurer, Department of Natural Resources director's designee)

The MWC appreciates the Legislature's continued support and the opportunity to report on the second half of fiscal year 2025 activities.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jason Garvon".

Jason Garvon, Chair

In compliance with Section 43532b(18)(b) of PA 451 of 1994, the MWC provides the following summary of Fiscal Year 2025 expenditures for the Michigan Wildlife Management Public Education Subaccount that was created within the Game and Fish Protection Account.

Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Expenditures for the Michigan Wildlife Council
(October 1, 2024 through September 30, 2025)

| Expenditure Description | Amount |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Research/Marketing/Creative/Media | \$1,448,000 |
| Administrative | \$1,900 |
| Total Expenditures | \$1,449,900 |