

# **Michigan Wildlife Council**

**Fiscal Year (FY) 2026**

**Operational Plan**

As Approved by the Michigan Wildlife Council

February 26, 2026

Pursuant to Michigan Act No. 246

Public Acts of 2013

Section 324.43532b

## **FY 2026 Operational Plan**

### **Section I: Name and Purpose**

The name, purpose, and membership of the organization shall be, in accordance with Act 246 of Public Acts of 2013, Section 324.43532b the "Michigan Wildlife Council."

### **Mission**

The mission for the Michigan Wildlife Council, set in statute: MCL 324.43532B (18), 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 that sportsmen and sportswomen play in furthering wildlife conservation and to educate the general public about hunting, fishing, and the taking of game. That education shall include, but is not limited to, teaching that hunting, fishing, and the taking of game are any of the following:*

- i. Necessary for the conservation, preservation, and management of this state's natural resources.*
- ii. A valued and integral part of the cultural heritage of this state and should forever be preserved.*
- iii. An important part of this state's economy.*

### **Section II: Media, Communication, and Education Objectives**

The Michigan Wildlife Council will develop a comprehensive media-based, public information program to promote the essential role that sportsmen and sportswomen play in furthering wildlife conservation and to educate the public about hunting, fishing, and the taking of game.

### **Communication Objectives**

- A. Program strategies will be evaluated annually using media industry-accepted scientific research techniques. Program strategies will be evaluated and modified based on research outcomes as necessary for optimal effectiveness.
- B. The Michigan Wildlife Council, in conjunction with the marketing contractor, will develop an annual, cost efficient, statewide media-based education plan that reaches the public focusing on the non-hunter and non-angler, using primarily high impact media vehicles including TV and radio. Other media vehicles may be utilized as well depending upon the recommendation of the advertising agency and/or the media buying agency.
- C. The Michigan Wildlife Council, in conjunction with the marketing contractor, shall produce strategies and materials as necessary to keep legislators, wildlife organizations, outdoor enthusiasts, license buyers, and the public informed about Michigan Wildlife Council activities and programs.

- D. The marketing contractor shall make recommendations to the Michigan Wildlife Council, based upon desired messaging strategy and research results, to guide the Michigan Wildlife Council in identifying relevant themes that are consistent with the Michigan Wildlife Council's mission for the public education media program.

### **Section III: Contracting, Operations, and Management**

The Michigan Wildlife Council will negotiate and secure fiscal year contract(s) with experienced vendor(s), qualified in marketing educational messages, research, and public relations. The contract(s) will be established via a formal State of Michigan competitive bid process. The Michigan Wildlife Council will engage contractor(s) to perform the following tasks:

- A. Conduct market audience research using existing data, secondary research, and primary research to establish and monitor benchmarks and measure effectiveness of the media plan and strategy.
- B. Recommend a multi-media education program in writing consistent with Michigan Wildlife Council objectives.
- C. Develop on-strategy message/content for the media campaign.
- D. Provide creative concepts for selection by the Michigan Wildlife Council.
- E. Develop in-person focus groups, online bulletin boards, and other communication venues to obtain feedback from target audiences.
- F. Recommend appropriate media plan and associated vehicles to meet the communication objectives and related costs.
- G. Upon Michigan Wildlife Council direction and approval, purchase media time and other communication resources, within budget.
- H. Implement and manage the program from an "educational campaign" perspective.
- I. Update and execute the annual statewide baseline survey with the public sector to monitor and measure the effectiveness of the program.
- J. Review effectiveness and consistency of message content and all media copy.
- K. Utilize pre-existing materials when appropriate.
- L. Seek the continual input and approval from the Michigan Wildlife Council, prior to any changes in messaging and/or media purchases.
- M. Provide activity reports, not less than monthly, for distribution to the Michigan Wildlife Council.
- N. Prior to the operational plan year end, make recommendations including cost estimates, for the following year's budget request.

#### **Section IV: Information Dissemination**

Due to the unique nature of the Educational Program, it is important for the Michigan Wildlife Council to use a variety of tools to educate the public and support its mission and plans.

#### **Section V: Annual Budget Review**

- A. Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) staff will help the Michigan Wildlife Council account for and manage the spending of funds to execute the program. The DNR will support the Michigan Wildlife Council to develop its spending request and budget and assist the Michigan Wildlife Council in securing legislative approval of the Michigan Wildlife Council budget, specifically including the line item qualifying the amount for fiscal year spending authority.
- B. The council treasurer shall track the annual budget and monitor the revenue and expenses for Michigan Wildlife Council. The treasurer shall provide the Michigan Wildlife Council with fund updates prior to quarterly meetings. Throughout the fiscal year any changes to the proposed budget will be reviewed and approved by the Michigan Wildlife Council.
- C. The Michigan wildlife management public education subaccount is created within the game and fish protection account.
- D. The state treasurer may receive money or other assets from any source for deposit into the subaccount. The state treasurer shall direct the investment of the subaccount. The state treasurer shall credit to the subaccount interest and earnings from subaccount investments. The Michigan Wildlife Council has the authority to approve/disapprove any donations to the subaccount.
- E. Money in the subaccount at the close of the fiscal year shall remain in the subaccount and shall not lapse to the game and fish protection account or the general fund.
- F. The DNR shall be the administrator of the subaccount for auditing purposes. The DNR will account for and periodically inform the Michigan Wildlife Council of substantial or projected changes to the subaccount.
- G. The Michigan Wildlife Council shall expend money from the subaccount, upon appropriation, only to support the program and to pay the department's administrative costs in implementing this section. Not more than 5 percent of the annual appropriations from the subaccount shall be spent on the administrative costs of the department in implementing this section.

**Section VI: Accountability**

- A. The Michigan Wildlife Council will meet at least on a quarterly basis, or more frequently at the call of the chairperson or if requested by a majority of the members serving. Minutes of all the meetings will be kept by a DNR employee for review and approval by the Michigan Wildlife Council.
- B. Michigan Wildlife Council subcommittees may be created to help move Michigan Wildlife Council business forward between regular council meetings.
- C. Michigan Wildlife Council membership will provide a semiannual report to the legislature on the program and expenditures.
- D. An operational plan will be prepared no later than April 30 each year.
- E. Expenditure of all funds must be in accordance with the operational plan and in compliance with section MCL 324.40501.

**Working Budget**

Fiscal Year (FY) 2025/2026

	<b>FY 2025 Encumbrance</b>	<b>FY 2026 Budget</b>	<b>FY 2026 Total</b>
Research/Marketing/Creative/Media	\$206,363	\$1,395,000	\$1,601,363
Administrative Costs		<u>\$5,000</u>	<u>\$5,000</u>
<b>Total FY 2026 Budget</b>		\$1,400,000	\$1,606,363

Notes:

\*Revenue will be monitored throughout the year to make sure the Council is earning enough to fund the budget.