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GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

LANSING



REBECCA A. HUMPHRIES
DIRECTOR

SUBMITTED: March 10, 2008
RESUBMITTED: April 14, 2008

MEMORANDUM TO THE DIRECTOR

Information: Natural Resources Commission

Subject: Adoption of the Updated Michigan Off-Road Vehicle (ORV) Management Plan
http://www.michigan.gov/documents/dnr/2008ORV_Mgt_Plan_Draft_222536_7.pdf

Authority:

Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, 1994 PA 451, Part 811 – “Off-Road Recreation Vehicles.”

Discussion and Background:

The Department of Natural Resources (Department) is responsible for managing an extensive system of designated ORV trails, routes, and areas for public recreational use.

The first statutory regulation of ORVs in Michigan was 1975 PA 319. This act required the Department to develop a comprehensive plan for the management of ORV use of areas, forest roads, and forest trails maintained by, or under, the jurisdiction of the Department. As a result, the Department published the first ORV plan in 1979. The 1979 plan recommended minimizing social conflict, meeting outdoor recreation needs, and protecting environmental integrity by confining ORV use on state public lands to the state forest roads, and a system of designated ORV trails, routes and areas. It also noted the need to have ORV riding facilities available to the public in southern Michigan where there were (and are) no state forest lands. Subsequently, the legislature, through passage of 1991 PA 17, further restricted the use of ORVs on Lower Peninsula public lands to only designated trails, routes and areas, closing undesigned forest roads to ORV use.

A Department initiated public planning process during 2004-2005 to update the ORV plan and assess program needs, resulted in diverse opinion. The process began with a proposal by Michigan State University (MSU) to update Michigan’s ORV Management Plan. Once accepted, the public process began with a presentation to the ORV Advisory Board in May 2004. Since then there has been significant public involvement through three geographically distributed public information meetings, workshops with ORV trail maintenance and environmental restoration grant recipients, opportunities for written comment and mail surveys of Michigan

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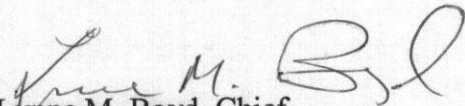
county sheriffs, Northern Michigan road commission managers, and ORV coordinators from 49 states. Also, meetings were held with Department field personnel and with the management team of Forest, Mineral and Fire Management, the lead division in ORV planning and administration. Finally, the author reviewed legislative history and research concerning ORV use and users in Michigan and elsewhere.

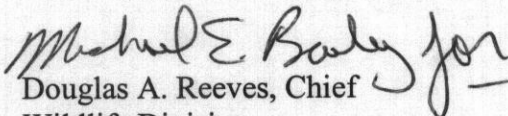
The Department accepted the draft plan from MSU on August 10, 2005. The ORV Management Plan was brought to the Natural Resources Commission in late 2006 for information and approval, but no action was taken as a result of a few concerns expressed by the public. Staff of Forest, Mineral and Fire Management have revised the plan, and completed an initial internal and public comment period ending on February 25, 2008. Based on these comments, additional revisions were completed and the plan is now ready for submittal to the Natural Resources Commission for information and action.

Recommendation:

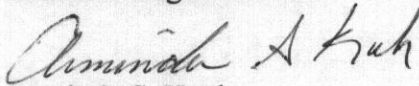
Staff recommends approval and adoption of the updated Michigan Off-Road Vehicle Management Plan.

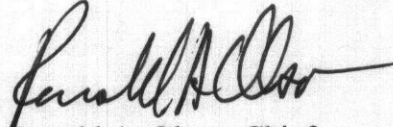
This order was submitted for information on April 10, 2008, at the Natural Resources Commission Meeting. This item appeared on the Department's March 31, 2008 calendar and may be eligible for approval on May 8, 2008.

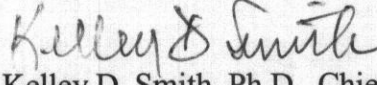

Lynne M. Boyd, Chief
Forest, Mineral and Fire Management



Douglas A. Reeves, Chief
Wildlife Division

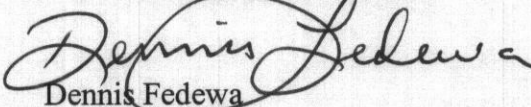
Patricia A. Spitzley, Chief
Office of Legal Services


Arminda S. Koch
Resource Management Deputy

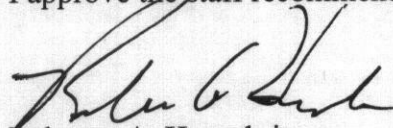

Ronald A. Olson, Chief
Parks and Recreation Division


Kelley D. Smith, Ph.D., Chief
Fisheries Division


Rodney Stokes, Acting Chief
Law Enforcement Division


Dennis Fedewa
Chief Deputy

I approve the staff recommendation.


Rebecca A. Humphries
Director

4/8/08
Date Approved