

**The Six Pillars for Michigan's Prosperity**  
**Our Best and Future Hope**

- 1 Attractive Cities and Neighborhoods
- 2 Highly Competitive Schools and Lifelong Learning Opportunities
- 3 Knowledge-Based Technologies and Michigan's Future
- 4 Thriving Agriculture to Grow Michigan's Economy
- 5 **Natural Resources for Recreation and Job Creation**
- 6 Inclusive and Entrepreneurial Culture

**PILLAR 5:**

**NATURAL RESOURCES FOR RECREATION AND JOB CREATION**

**Michigan's Natural Resources Enrich Our Quality of Life and Enhance Our Economy**

In the 1950s, Michigan touted itself as the Water Wonderland in advertising throughout Michigan and the Midwest. Most of our borders are graced by the Great Lakes, which boast 20 percent of the world's fresh water and 90 percent of the fresh water in the United States.

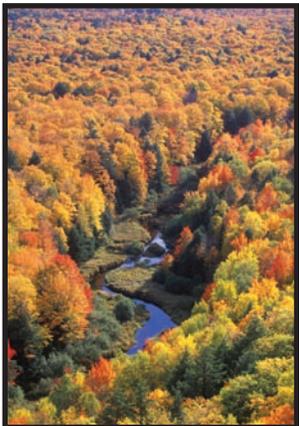
And with 11,000 inland lakes, 36,000 miles of rivers and streams, and 5.5 million acres of wetlands, Michigan's 37 million acres of land area are made even more productive and attractive by its water resources. Yet while water remains by far our state's most obvious asset, it is certainly not our only natural resource.



Within the state-owned land are 3.9 million acres of forest, 285,000 acres of parks, 340,000 acres of game and wildlife areas, and 84,070 acres of recreation areas. Within the federally-owned land are 2.7 million acres of forest and some of Michigan's largest and most impressive parks: Isle Royale (571,790 acres), Pictured Rocks (73,235 acres), and Sleeping Bear Dunes (71,290 acres). When private forestland is included, Michigan has 24,000 square miles of forests that cover 53 percent of Michigan's land base. Michigan residents and tourists also have available 57,000 acres of designated public water access sites. (P5-1)

**Michigan's Outdoor Bounty**

Approximately 21 percent of Michigan's land base is open to the public for outdoor recreation, including 214,000 acres of local parks, 4.5 million acres of state-owned land, and 7.3 million acres of federally-owned land. Public access to these lands is an important source of camping, hunting, and other recreational activities. Within the state-owned land are 3.9 million acres of forest, 285,000 acres of parks, 340,000 acres of game and wildlife areas, and 84,070 acres of recreation areas. Within the federally-owned land are 2.7 million acres of forest and some of Michigan's largest and most impressive parks: Isle Royale (571,790 acres), Pictured Rocks (73,235 acres), and Sleeping Bear Dunes (71,290 acres). When private forestland is included, Michigan has 24,000 square miles of forests that cover 53 percent of Michigan's land base. Michigan residents and tourists also have available 57,000 acres of designated public water access sites. (P5-1)



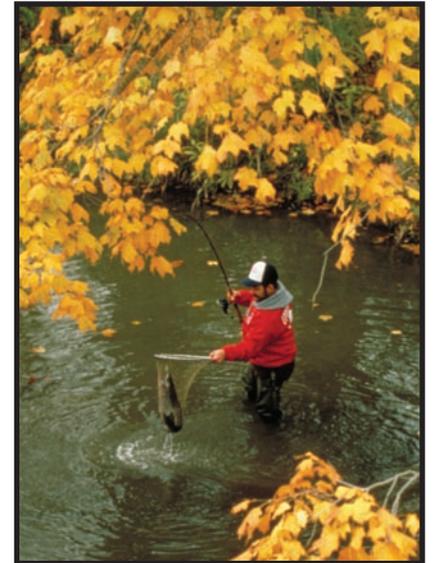
**Economic Benefits of Our Recreational Assets**

The National Park Service reported 1,649,349 visits in 2006, which resulted in spending of \$44.7 million by non-local visitors alone. (P5-2) As to employment, for 2007 the NPS reported an estimated 1,182 jobs and tax income from those jobs of \$27.5 million. For state parks and recreation areas, over 22,334,219 day user and camper days were counted in 2006. (P5-3) State parks do not normally keep statistics on economic impact, but a 2007 Land Policy Institute study of just one small park, the Rifle River Recreation Area, estimated a total annual economic impact of \$1.7 million. (P5-4) Imagine the value of our other state parks.

Often under the radar when considering our state's economy, hunting and fishing are major economic drivers in Michigan. Remarkably, 1 in 6 Michigan residents hunt or fish, and Michigan attracts 32,000 out-of-state hunters and 318,000 out-of-state anglers annually. Combined, every day in 2006, 1.37 million hunters and anglers spent \$9.4 million pursuing their outdoor passions. According to National Fish and Wildlife Service surveys, sportsman support 46,000 Michigan jobs, and boaters spent \$177 million a year on outboard boats and engines to ply Michigan waters. In total, without counting boaters, Michigan sportsmen, anglers, and hunters annually contribute \$6.7 billion in spending to our economy. (P5-5)

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**Tourism a Major Industry**

A 2004 study found that Michigan travel revenues were \$17.5 billion, generating \$971 million in state and local taxes and accounting for 193,000 jobs statewide. (P5-6) Clearly, Michigan's economy depends on perceptions of Michigan's ability to provide inviting opportunities to visit and recreate here. Recent new funding opportunities to expand the "Pure Michigan" campaign are a positive step, but Michigan must do more to promote its unique tourism and recreation.



## Natural Products Deliver Jobs

Michigan's forest products are but one example of natural resources that can provide important employment opportunities, especially in the economically depressed Upper Peninsula. One out of ten of all manufacturing jobs in Michigan is accounted for by the forest products industry, although more than 20,000 jobs have been lost in recent years. Despite those losses, the total economic benefit of the industry remains greater than \$11 billion and represents more than 150,000 jobs.<sup>(P5-7)</sup>

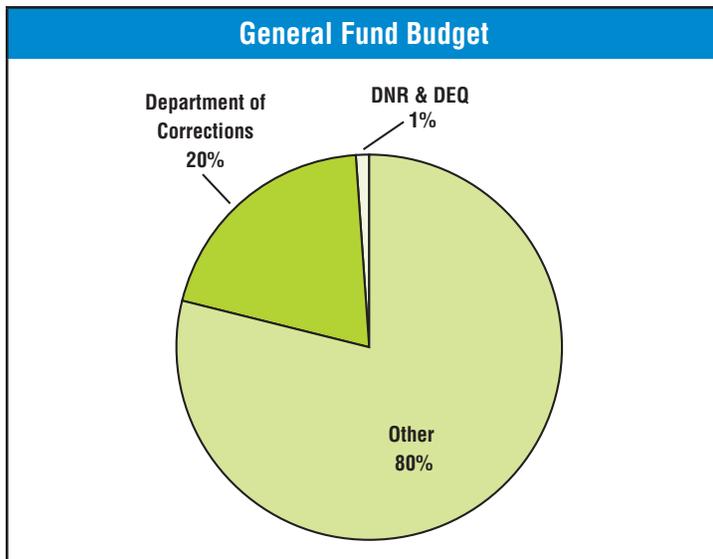
## Valuable Resources Must Be Nurtured

Even though Michigan's natural resources make major contributions to our state's attractiveness, health, recreational opportunities, and bottom line revenues, Michigan ranks 47th among the states in its per capita investment in maintaining the quality of those resources.<sup>(P5-8)</sup> Overall, General Fund support for the Department of Natural Resources has shrunk by two-thirds since 2000 and Department of Environmental Quality General Fund appropriation have fallen from just slightly more than \$100 million in 2002 to \$28 million in 2007.<sup>(P5-9)</sup>



dollars in economic benefits in the wider lakes ecosystem. The report showed that metro Detroit would reap \$3.7 to \$7 billion in economic benefits, second only to Chicago's economic gain, if the nation makes a big upfront investment in the cleanup. The overall benefit from cleaner Great Lakes might run to \$50 billion, with a probable cleanup cost of \$20 billion, according to Brookings. Bottom line, the benefits exceed the cost by a ratio of more than 2-1.

It's critical that Michigan and the nation consider the damage to our region's future if we continue to take for granted the natural beauty bequeathed to us. It begs the question of what kind of Michigan we will offer to attract talent and bequeath to our own children's children.



SOURCE: [http://www.michigan.gov/documents/budget/FY09\\_Budget\\_Signing\\_Release\\_-\\_FINAL\\_-\\_7\\_18\\_08\\_242669\\_7.doc](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/budget/FY09_Budget_Signing_Release_-_FINAL_-_7_18_08_242669_7.doc)

Such disinvestment flies in the face of surveys of the knowledge workers so important to Michigan's future prosperity. These people make clear that the quality-of-life amenities they find essential to a region include easy access to outdoor activities, a clean and healthy environment, and commitment to preserving natural resources for enjoyment and recreation. In the current budget climate, we would not get passing grades.

Most importantly, despite the inviting promise of "Pure Michigan," our state's greatest assets, the Great Lakes, are threatened by invasive species, toxic sediments, and declining—even vanishing—fish populations. According to a Brookings Institution study released in April 2008,<sup>(P5-10)</sup> investment in cleaning up the Great Lakes would generate billions of

### Learn More

For more information about natural resources for recreation and job creation and to explore sources for this article, visit [www.PeopleandLand.org](http://www.PeopleandLand.org). The Six Pillars for Prosperity are endorsed by PAL member organizations, including:

- Michigan Association of REALTORS®
- Michigan Chamber of Commerce
- Michigan Environmental Council
- Michigan Farm Bureau
- Michigan Suburbs Alliance
- Michigan United Conservation Clubs
- NAACP – Detroit Branch