



Michigan's Proposed Water Trail Program



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Trails are good for communities



- Sense of place; people want to live near trails and in walkable communities
- Increased land values
- Healthy recreation and transportation options
- Connected communities and community centers
- Highlight local history
- Public exposure to stewardship



Michigan State Trails Program

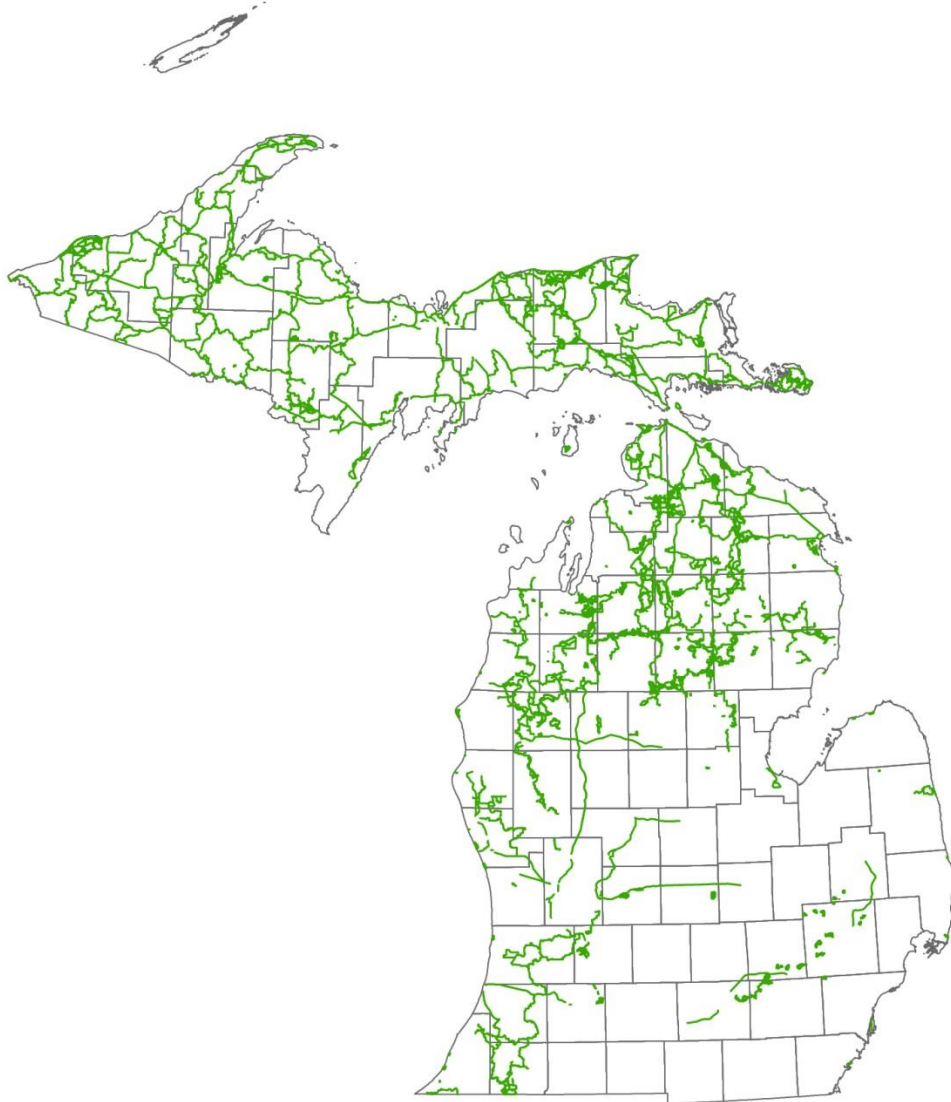


Over 12,500 miles of designated state trails





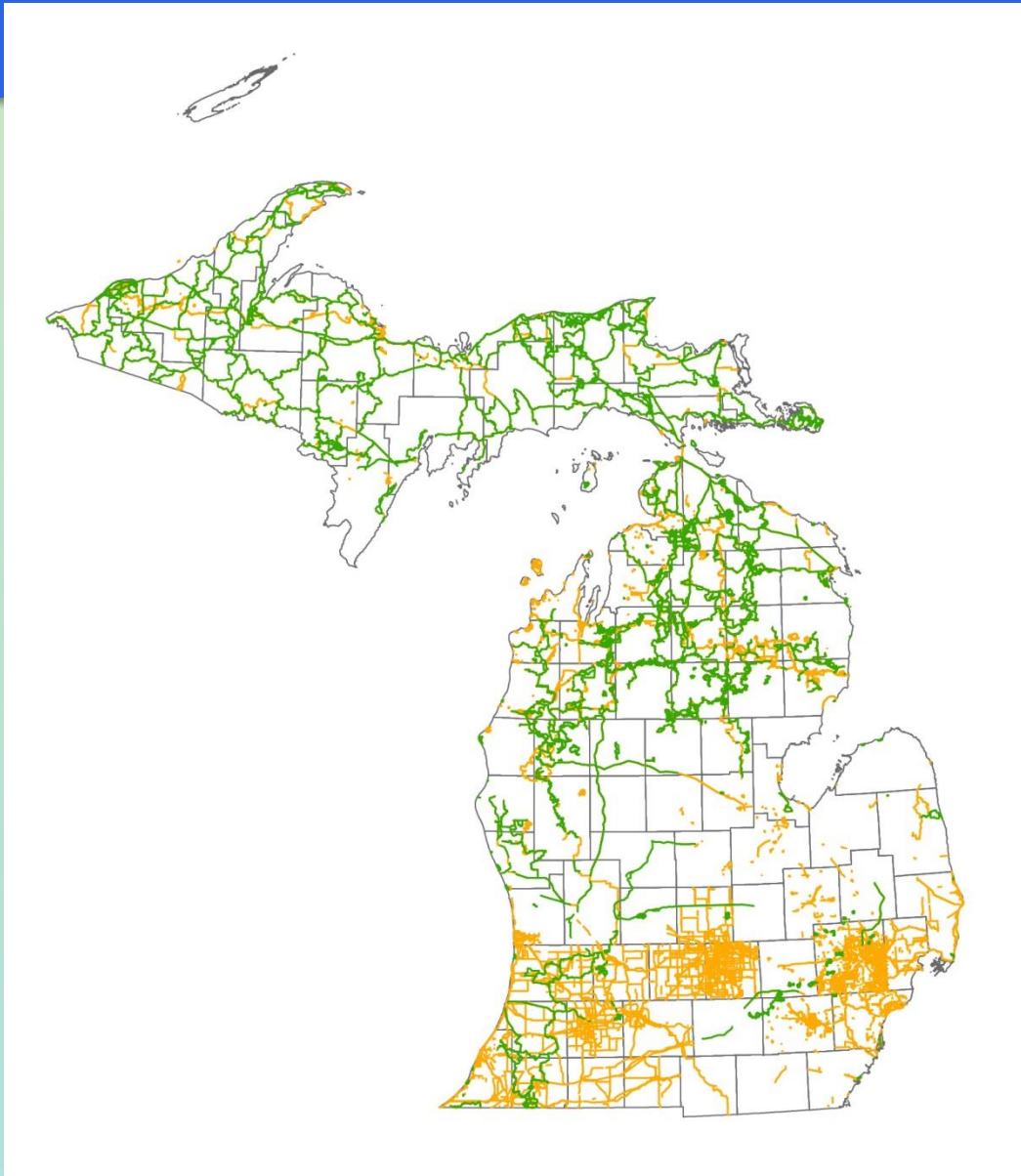
National Leader in Trails



- State Designated Trails
— 12,500+ miles



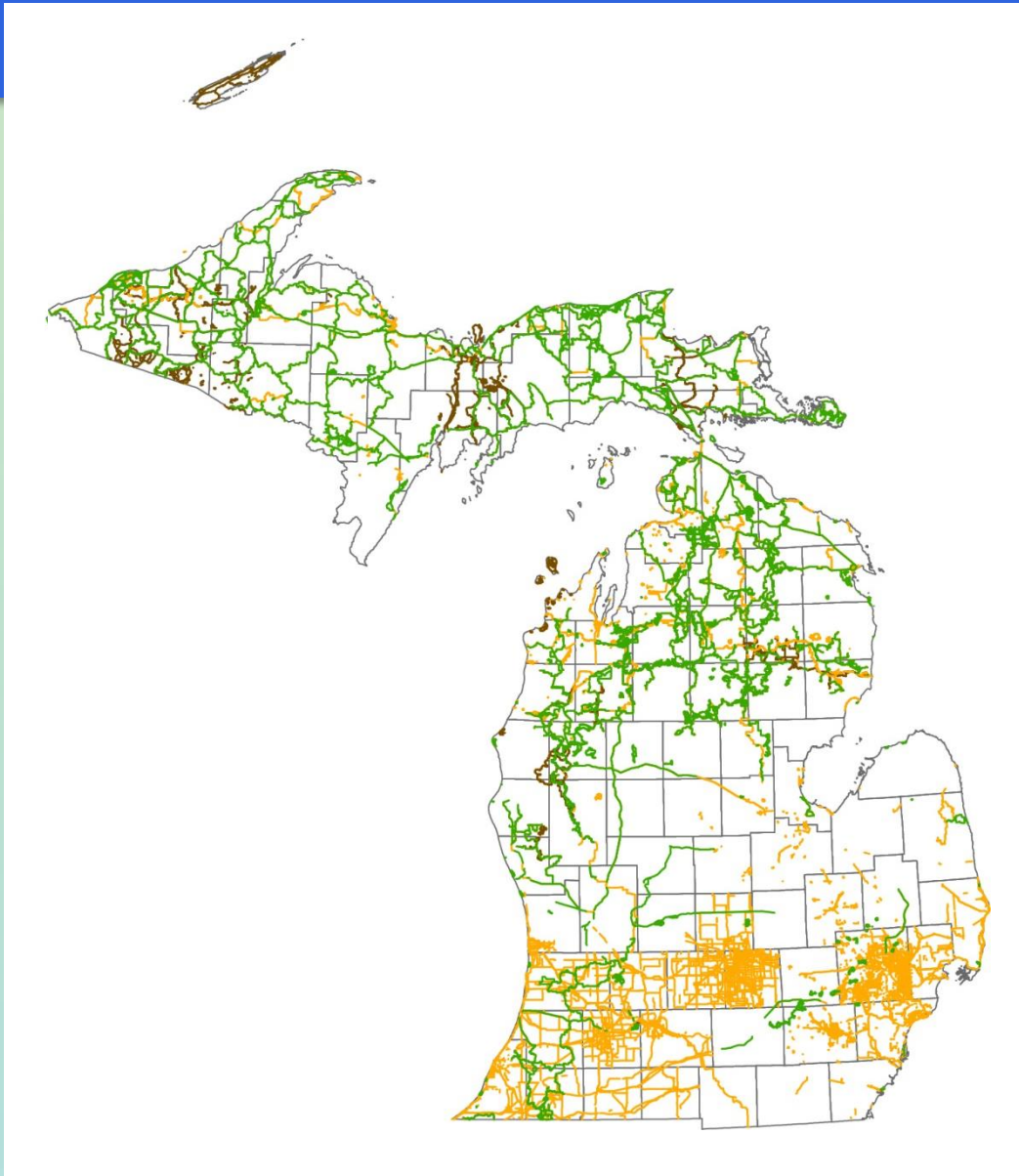
National Leader in Trails



- State Designated Trails
— 12,500+ miles
- Local Trails
— 5,500+ miles



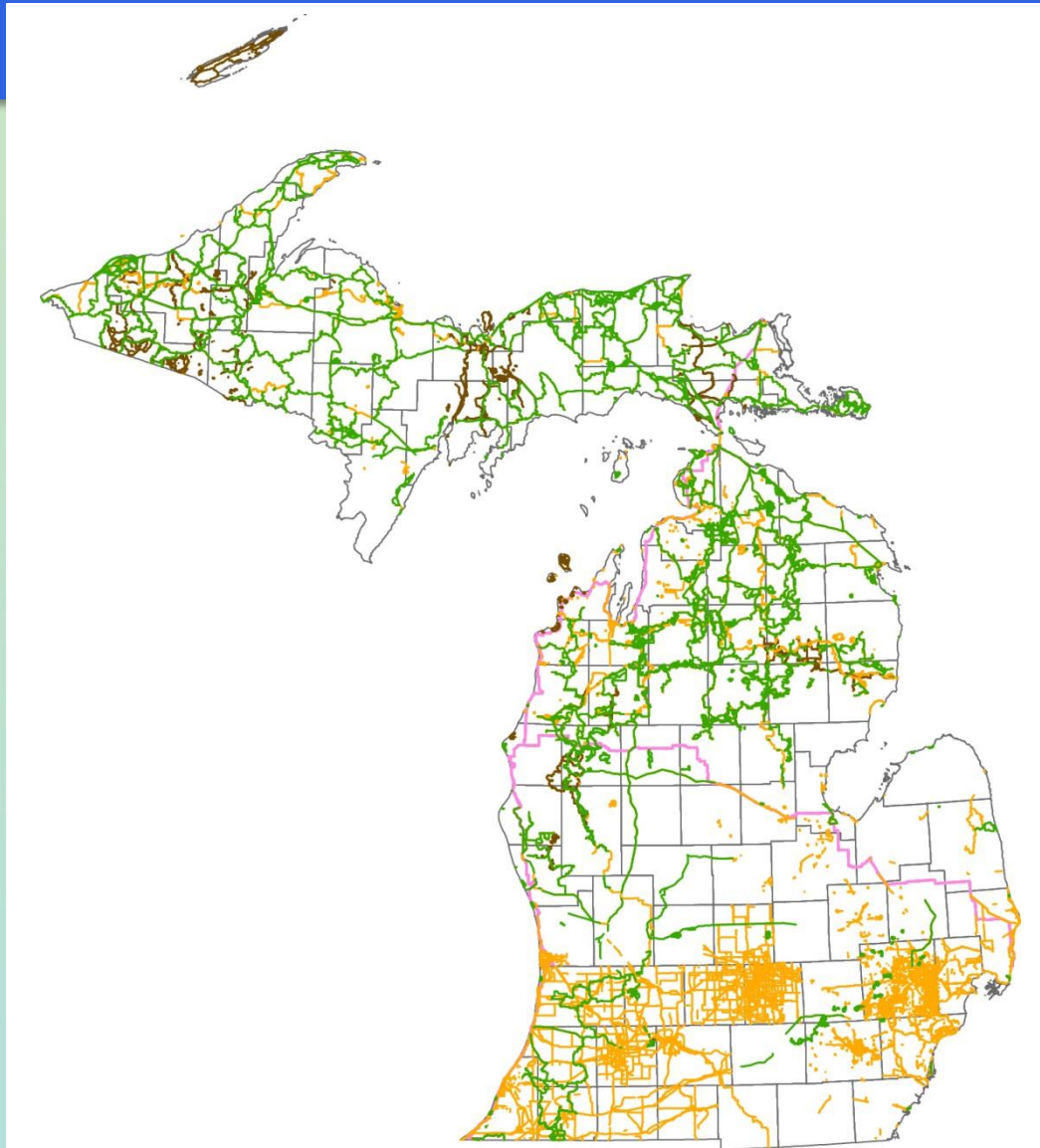
National Leader in Trails



- State Designated Trails
— 12,000+ miles
- Local Trails
— 5,500+ miles
- Forest Service and NPS Trails
— 1,600+ miles



National Leader in Trails



- State Designated Trails
— 12,000+ miles
 - Local Trails
— 5,500+ miles
 - Forest Service and NPS Trails
— 1,600+ miles
 - US Bike Routes
— 900+ miles
- Total 20,000 miles**

September 17-24, 2016

michigan trails week

more than **12,500** miles of designated state trails



4,170

HIKING



3,800

OFF-ROAD
VEHICLE TRAILS



1,490

EQUESTRIAN TRAILS



973

STATE PARK TRAILS



1,483

BIKE TRAILS



6,204

SNOWMOBILE TRAILS



Michigan is the National Leader in Trails

FIND YOUR TRAIL ADVENTURE AT

www.michigan.gov/trailsweek





But...
two things missing

State Designated
border to border trail

Two routes, one great trail.



www.michigan.gov/dnrtrails

The Hiking Route

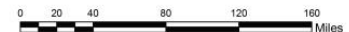
- Hiking - Existing Route
- Hiking - Proposed Route

The Bicycle Route

- Bicycle - Existing Route
- Bicycle - Proposed Route

- Highway
- Lakes and Rivers
- City
- County Boundary
- State Park Boundary
- State Land
- Federal Land

** The illustrated hike and bicycle trail connections will rely upon partnership opportunities.





State Designated Water Trail Program

Michigan has the most great lakes coastline, thousands of miles of rivers and inland lakes coastline and we are the trail state.

So the question is not why have a program, but how can we not?

This is documented in the State Trail Plan, State Land Strategy and Water Strategy.





Michigan Water Trail Opportunities

- 3288 miles of Great Lakes Coastline
- 10,000 miles of rivers and streams
- 11,000 inland lakes (over five acres)
- One of tourism's largest growth rate is in paddle sports.





Why is a program needed?

When:

- There are already locally designated water trails
- People have been using “water trails” for centuries
- There is a National Water Program
- Private liveries already promote their trails

Because:

- Providing clear information to the public is essential.
- Development of standards are required to have consistent information to manage public expectation.
- Regional engagement and coordination is needed to develop, market and maintain a water trail.



**NATIONAL WATER
TRAILS SYSTEM**



How do you create a new state program?

Create a draft policy

- Internal Policy Document
- Review by Division Chiefs
- Process for Approval

- Why follow this process?
 - Provide direction for future employees
 - Ensure review by different perspectives
 - Remove potential conflicts, arbitrary and inconsistent decision-making





End Result

State Designated Water Trails:

Water trails that are supported by broad-based community partnerships, have applied for designation, have been granted that status by the DNR. The trail provides conservation, heritage and recreation opportunities.

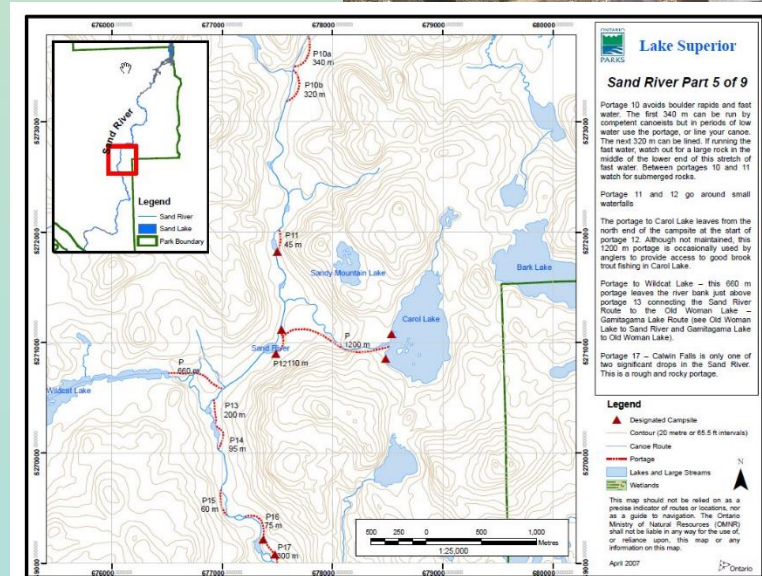
State Designated water trails can be for either motorized or non-motorized use.



Highlights of Water Trail Criteria

The DNR, in designating a water trail, will seek to ensure the following:

- A quality trail experience
- Clear information for users
- Broad community support
- A sustainable Business plan





Designation Types

1. Inland Water Trails, non-motorized

– Beginner Segments

- Shorter segments (1-2 hours/3-6 miles)
- Well signed and spaced access sites
- Exposure to new users

– Intermediate Segments

- Longer segments (2-4 hours/6-12 miles)
- Increase skill level needed

– Advanced Segments

- Longer segments (4+ hours/12+miles)
- Increased skill level needed
- Navigation & self rescue required





Designation Types continued

2. Great Lakes Water Trails

- Along great lakes coastline and connecting water bodies.
- Provide consistency with Great Lakes partners



3. Motorized Water Trails

- Unique opportunities such as the Chain of Lakes and Inland Waterway





Process for designation

- Applicants must show how they meet the four criteria of the program
 - Quality Trail experience
 - Clear Information for Users
 - Broad Community Support
 - Sustainable Business Plan
- Then it will go through the DNR's Trail Proposal Process (includes reviews from all DNR Divisions)
- Final approval is by the DNR's State Trail Coordinator



After Designation

- Trail segment types, additional segments, accessible segments and amenities can be changed
- Self auditing will be required for make sure the trail is maintained to state standards.
- DNR can remove a trail from designation.





Review/Input/Question/Comments

Draft Policy can be downloaded at:

http://liaa.org/media/projects/media/draft_criteria_for_a_designated_water_trail_final_version2_81816.pdf

Send comments by September 30th to:

DNR-Watertrails@michigan.gov

