



Ontario proposes a hunting season for double-crested cormorants

The Province of Ontario is proposing to list the double-crested cormorant as a game bird, create a hunting season in Ontario for population management and make related changes. This proposal would be implemented through a series of regulatory and legislative amendments. The proposal is open for comments through [January 3, 2019](#). [Submit a comment](#)

Double-crested cormorant (*Phalacrocorax auritus*) populations declined significantly in the Great Lakes from the 1950s to the 1970s primarily due to environmental contaminants affecting reproduction. Their numbers began to increase rapidly from the 1970s to the early 2000s, with the latest information indicating Great Lakes populations have since stabilized or declined slightly.

There continues to be concerns expressed by some groups (commercial fishing industry, property owners) and individuals that cormorants have been detrimental to fish populations, island forest habitats, other species and aesthetics. To respond to these concerns, the Ministry is proposing to create a hunting season for double-crested cormorants in Ontario. This new population management tool would allow persons who hold a small game license to hunt these birds.

The following changes are being proposed to create a hunting season for cormorants beginning in 2019:

- List the double-crested cormorant as a “Game Bird.” Hunters would be required to have an outdoors card and small game license to hunt double-crested cormorants, similar to other species of game birds.

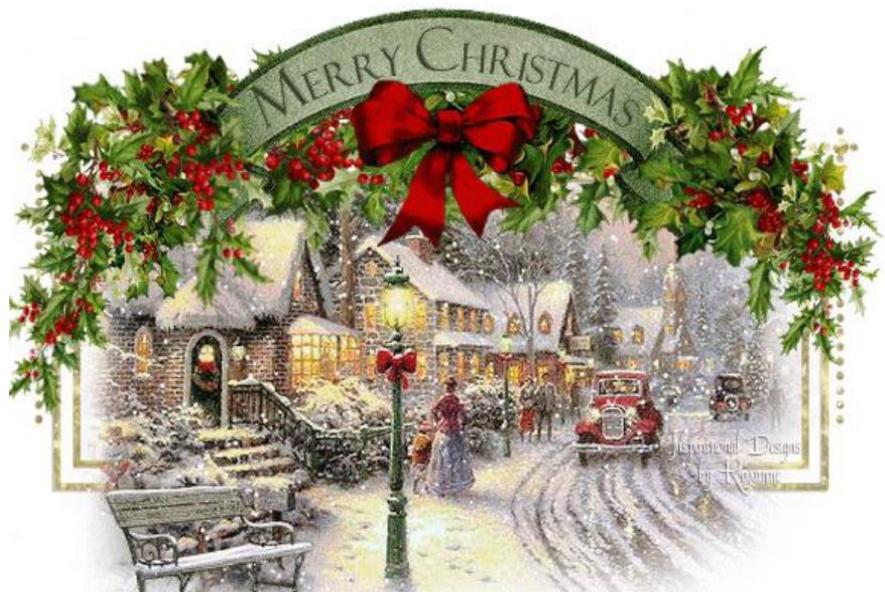
- Create an open hunting season for double-crested cormorant from March 15 to December 31 each year across the province.
- Create an exemption allowing small game licenses to be valid for double-crested cormorant hunting in central and northern Ontario from June 16 to August 31 each year.
- Establish a daily bag limit of 50 cormorants with no possession limit.
- Prescribe shotgun and shot size/type requirements consistent with migratory bird hunting regulations outlined in the federal Migratory Birds Regulations. This would include use of shotguns that are not larger than 10 gauge, that cannot hold more than three shells and use non-toxic shot as described in the migratory bird regulations.
- Allow hunting from a stationary motorboat.

Hunting Season for Cormorants

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Board recommends \$26 million to enhance outdoor recreation

The Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund board recommended \$26 million for outdoor recreation development and land acquisition projects to the state Legislature.

This funding will support outdoor recreation improvements including public access at popular beach destinations, additional snowmobile and multiuse trail easements, facility and playground improvements at urban parks, construction of new trails and connectors, water trail projects and sports field expansion.

The board recommended \$26 million in grants, including \$7.4 million for [34 recreation developments](#) and \$18.6 million for [30 land acquisition projects](#). Consider, too, that grant recipients have committed to providing matching funds of \$15.9 million, bringing the total in outdoor recreation and conservation to more than \$41.9 million for this cycle.

Of \$18.6 million recommended, \$12 million would be awarded to local government. Of the \$7.4 million planned for fund development grants, \$6.9 million would support 30 local government projects and \$500,000 would support four DNR projects.

The board considered 158 applications seeking more than \$71 million. In a competitive process, all eligible applications were evaluated by the board.

The Trust Fund is financed through interest earned on funds derived from the development of publicly owned minerals such as oil and natural gas. Over the past 40-plus years, the Trust Fund has granted more than \$1 billion to state and local government to develop and improve recreation projects in all 83 counties.

“The funding provided through the Trust Fund is critical to ensuring that residents have quality outdoor recreation opportunities, and beautiful natural spaces to enjoy them,” said DNR Director Keith Creagh.

For more info: michigan.gov/mnrtrf. ✧

Trump signs Coast Guard bill with Great Lakes provisions

President Trump signed legislation setting a framework for ballast water regulations and creating a research center in the Great Lakes to study the impact of oil spills in fresh water.

Legislation passed by Congress preserves the EPA’s authority under the Clean Water Act to set treatment standards for ballast water and other discharges from ships. Such discharges can transfer harmful invasive species to the freshwater Great Lakes.

The language authorizes \$50 million a year for a new program under the EPA for monitoring and responding to outbreaks of invasive species in the Great Lakes and to help develop ballast-control technologies.

The bill also included a provision authorizing a USCG National Center of Expertise for the Great Lakes, tasked with advancing research, development and testing of freshwater oil spill response equipment.

Last year, the then-commandant of the Coast Guard said the agency was not prepared for an oil spill in the Great Lakes, as existing technologies for responding to oil spills are designed for salt-water environments.

The Coast Guard would ultimately decide where to locate the center in the next year.

Its mandate would include training first responders on the incident command structure system and response technologies and strategies.

An oil spill in the Great Lakes would be detrimental to our economy, our environment and our drinking water. It is alarming to hear that current technology is insufficient to clean up an oil spill in one of our most precious natural resources.

The new Coast Guard Great Lakes Center of Expertise will build upon the good work already happening in Michigan to further advance research, development and testing of freshwater oil spill response equipment and protect the Great Lakes for generations to come. ✧



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Position Statement

Representing a major interest in the aquatic resources of the Great Lakes states and the province of Ontario, the Great Lakes Sport Fishing Council is a confederation of organizations and individuals with a concern for the present and future of sport fishing, our natural resources and the ecosystem in which we live. We encourage the wise use of our resources and a search for the truth about the issues confronting us.

Inland Seas Angler

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DNR to host employment event for military veterans

The Minnesota DNR is hosting its second annual Veteran Employment Information Event on Tuesday, Jan. 8, in St. Paul. Many veterans want to work in a natural resources environment, and many military skills translate into DNR positions.

At the event, veterans will have the opportunity to talk to DNR staff, including those who work in the areas of fisheries and wildlife, information technology, GIS and mapping, forestry, enforcement, engineering, and more. It's a chance to find out from those who work it every day about the different job responsibilities, education requirements, and how military work experience translates.

Attendees will have the option to meet with current DNR employees who are also military veterans, and learn resume tips for translating military skills and experience to better match position qualifications. Human resources staff will provide information on how to apply for DNR jobs, set up job searches, and receive job posting notifications.

Veterans will also be on hand to answer questions about how to successfully juggle military and civilian commitments. Information on DNR veteran support resources will also be available.

This event is free and will be held at the DNR Headquarters, 500 Lafayette Road N., St. Paul, MN 55101. Space is limited and registration is required. Register for a time slot between 9:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. Go to: tinyurl.com/dnrvets2019.

Veterans will receive a welcome packet with additional information when registration is confirmed. Similar veteran employment informational events will be held in Bemidji, Grand Rapids, and Mankato in early 2019.

The DNR is Yellow Ribbon Company—a veteran friendly employer. ✧

Fishing regulation changes on Lake of the Woods and Rainy River

Anglers will be able to keep fewer walleye and sauger beginning March 1 on Lake of the Woods and the Rainy River.

“The new regulations will help ensure the long-term sustainability of the resource while maintaining fishing opportunities,” said Phil Talmage, DNR Baudette area fisheries supervisor. “We received a ton of public comment from anglers and there was very strong support for the proposed changes.”

The winter regulations on Lake of the Woods will match the current summer regulations, reducing the aggregate walleye and sauger limit from eight to six, with no more than four walleye. The protected slot limit remains in effect that requires anglers to immediately release any walleye between 19.5-28”, with only one fish over 28” allowed in possession.

“The walleye and sauger fishery on the lake remains strong right now, but we’re looking to the future and adapting regulations based on what we’re seeing through our fish monitoring program and angler surveys,” Talmage said.

Rainy River regulations

On the Rainy River and Fourmile Bay, a catch-and-release season will be in effect March 1 to April 14. The current Rainy River spring season regulation allows anglers to keep two walleye or sauger, and requires the immediate release of walleye 19.5” in length or larger.

Lake of the Woods

The DNR has also recently updated the fisheries management plan for Lake of the Woods. That plan, developed through a public input process, will guide fisheries management on Lake of the Woods through 2023.

For more info about Lake of the Woods, the Rainy River, the new management plan, public comments and DNR responses to FAQs: mndnr.gov/lakeofthewoods. ✧

Plan to block Asian carp could cost millions

A plan to block Asian carp from reaching the Great Lakes could cost Illinois taxpayers: an updated proposal of \$778 million, up from a previous estimate of \$275 million. The state of Illinois could be responsible for up to 35 percent of the total, but Lt. Gov. Evelyn Sanguinetti said that's not all.

“Then there's also operations and maintenance,” Sanguinetti said. “That's millions each year we must pay in perpetuity, meaning forever.”



The report, from the Army Corps of Engineers, is part of an effort to stop the invasive carp from becoming established in the Great Lakes. Experts warn carp could squeeze out native species and harm the \$7 billion fishing industry. The recommended plan includes additional noise barriers, electric barriers, and a flushing lock system at the Brandon Road Lock near Joliet. That site previously was identified as the optimal choke point to halt the carp from advancing.

Shipping in the Chicago area waterways could be slowed during construction. Sanguinetti said many private-sector industries also are concerned about what this could mean for them.

“They've been able to eliminate this species 93% in the Dresden Island Pool, which is where most Asian carp lie,” Sanguinetti said.

The report will be **open for public comment until December 24** and must be finalized by a February 2019 deadline. ✧

RBFF boat registration program brings more than 50,000 boats back to the water

The Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation (RBFF) announced that its Boat Registration Reactivation Program enticed 50,462 boat owners with lapsed registrations to renew their registration and get back on the water. This year's program saw letters sent to lapsed boat owners in 19 states.

"For years, our Boat Registration Reactivation Program has successfully brought lapsed boaters back to the sport," said RBFF President & CEO Frank Peterson. "With fishing being the number one activity done from a boat, the return on investment and impact on conservation funding make this program a no-brainer."

In all, more than 600,000 letters were sent to owners of lapsed boats in 19 states, resulting in 50,462 registrations.

The Virginia Department of Game & Inland Fisheries (DGIF) has long been a participant in the Boat Registration Reactivation Program. "We were excited to partner again this year with RBFF to try and welcome lapsed boaters back to the water in Virginia," said Virginia DGIF Executive Director Bob Duncan. DGIF values boaters as a key constituent in supporting Virginia outdoor recreation, and being able to keep them active is important. By leveraging RBFF's marketing resources and expertise with our own, we have been able to realize real success every year."

Over the entirety of RBFF's Boat Registration Reactivation Program, \$11,723,086 million in revenue has been brought in from 321,672 boats being re-registered. Response rate for the 2018 program was 8.76%, well above the direct mail benchmark of 3%, [according to McCarthy & King](#). All of this comes from a program that is 100% funded by RBFF and only requires minimal staff time from state agencies to participate.

For more info: [contact Joanne Martonik](#). ✧

Rivers new Director of DEC Law Enforcement

New York announced the appointment of Captain Bernard "Bernie" Rivers to the position of Director of the Division of Law Enforcement (DLE).

A Hudson Valley native with 27 years of experience with DEC, Rivers has served as Acting Director since March following the retirement of former Director Joseph Schneider. As DLE Director, Rivers will lead 289 Conservation Police Officers (ECOs) across the state in the enforcement arm of DEC, tasked with safeguarding the state's natural resources and enforcing the Environmental Conservation Law (ECL) that protects fish and wildlife, environmental quality and the citizens of New York.

Rivers, 55, a 1981 graduate of Minisink Valley High School, has more than 37 years of law enforcement experience, having spent the last 27 years as an ECO. A graduate of Empire State College and the FBI National Academy, Rivers began his career in law enforcement as a NYS Corrections Officer. He also served as a part-time police officer in Mount Hope, Walkkill, Chester, and Montgomery police departments.

He graduated from DLE's 9th Basic School in 1992, and has served in several positions as an ECO in Long Island, New York City, and the Hudson Valley, including as a Uniformed Officer, Investigator, and as both a Regional Lieutenant and Supervising Captain.

I am honored to have been selected by the Commissioner to oversee DEC's Division of Law Enforcement," Rivers said. "This has been the job and career I've always wanted since my senior year of high school when I first met an Environmental Conservation Police Officer who spoke to our law enforcement class."

Rivers most recently served in DEC's Central Office in Albany as the head of DLE's Office of Professional Standards. A father of two adult sons, Rivers lives in the Hudson Valley with his girlfriend of two years and her two children. ✧

Nominations open for Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee – thru **Dec 24, 2018**

NOAA Fisheries is seeking nominations to fill vacancies on the **Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee (MAFAC)**. MAFAC advises the Secretary of Commerce on all living marine resource matters that are the responsibility of the Department of Commerce. The Committee draws on its members' expertise and other sources to evaluate and make recommendations to the Secretary and NOAA on the development and implementation of agency regulations, policies, and programs critical to the mission and goals of the NOAA Fisheries Service.

MAFAC members represent the wide spectrum of commercial, recreational, subsistence, and aquaculture fisheries interests; tribes; seafood industry; protected resources and habitat interests; environmental organizations; academic institutions; consumer groups; and other living marine resource interest groups.

Nominees should possess demonstrable expertise in one of these fields and be able to fulfill the time commitments required for two in-person annual meetings and between-meeting subcommittee work. Individuals serve for a term of three years. Members may serve a second consecutive term, if re-appointed.

A MAFAC member cannot be a Federal employee, a member of a Regional Fishery Management Council, a registered Federal lobbyist, or a State employee. Membership is voluntary, and except for reimbursable travel and related expenses, service is without pay. The committee functions solely as an advisory body.

Nomination instructions and guidelines are described in this [Federal Register notice](#). For questions or more information, please contact Jennifer Lukens, Executive Director of MAFAC, jennifer.lukens@noaa.gov or Heidi Lovett, heidi.lovett@noaa.gov. ✧

Risk Assessment of the Presence of Grass Carp in the Great Lakes Basin

The overarching goal of this study was to provide a socio-economic risk impact assessment of the potential risk that would stem from the presence of Grass Carp in the Great Lakes Basin. Policy and Economics, C&A Region greatly appreciates the close collaboration of the team

comprising experts from DFO, GLFC and OMNRF over the course of the study. The study also benefitted from the 2014 Grass Carp Risk Assessment workshop in Ohio, U.S., and the 2015 socio-economic methodology workshop in Ontario, Canada. The workshops were attended by subject

matter experts from DFO, OMNRF, GLFC and academic institutions. The study was peer reviewed by the DFO Science and Ecological Risk Assessment team and subject matter experts identified by GLFC and OMNRF.

Estimated Present Values (USD Mil.) of Affected Activities in the Great Lakes in 10 Years and 40 Years by Country/Activity

Sector Impacted	Canada			The US		
	Baseline (2024)	10 Years (2033)	40 Years (2063)	Baseline (2024)	10 Years (2033)	40 Years (2063)
Commercial Fishing	\$230	\$244	\$1,300	\$145	\$102	\$663
Recreational Fishing	\$556	\$345	\$2,604	\$3,000	\$2,401	\$14,615
Hunting	NA	NA	NA	\$31	NA	NA
Recreational Boating	\$2,300	NA	NA	\$4,900	NA	NA
Beaches/Lakefront Use	\$235	NA	NA	\$1,100	NA	NA
Wildlife Viewing	NA	NA	NA	\$121	NA	NA

Source: Fisheries and Oceans Canada staff calculation, Policy and Economics, Central and Arctic Region.

As for recreational fishing, starting in 2024, the present value of impact in Canada would be at \$345 million and \$2,600 million in 10 years and 40 years, respectively. The present value of impact on Great Lakes fishing in the U.S. would be at \$2,400 million and \$14,615 million in 10 years and 40 years, respectively.

The study also anticipated that the presence of Grass Carp in the Great Lakes would decrease beach/lake front use, wildlife viewing, hunting opportunities and associated economic benefits to some degree, relative to the extent of deterioration of wetlands and bird species habitat and deterioration of water quality and cladophora-related problems caused by the presence of Grass Carp. On the other hand, the presence of Grass Carp may benefit the recreational boating activities in the form of reduced cost for vegetation control effort. However, the impact on such activities could not be quantified as these activities were not directly linked to ecological consequences found in DFO ecological risk assessments.

The study recognized that during the period considered, there could be factors in the economy at work that

might create counteracting forces on the impacts of Grass Carp on communities, businesses, and individuals. Therefore, the net economic impacts might be counterbalanced at the regional and national levels, while remaining significant for the stakeholders, when taking into account the (re)distribution of income and employment as a consequence of change in the scale of activities in and around the Great Lakes Basin.

In terms of damage to ecosystem services, the study found that Grass Carp populations have the potential to nearly completely remove aquatic plants, influence macrophyte composition, damage banks and cause erosion and increased turbidity resulting in the loss of ecosystem services and a non-functioning environment. Despite the difficulty of quantifying, the economic value of damages to wetlands along the Great Lakes may perceive to be substantial.

From social and cultural aspects, the presence of Grass Carp has the potential to harm the well-being of residents living close to such a unique natural resource. Grass Carp may significantly damage subsistence harvests of native species from the

Great Lakes and reduce the social, and cultural values of the lakes and of lake-related activities. It may also create competition between subsistence harvesters and anglers and commercial harvesters if changes cause fewer species availability.

It is also noted that the estimated baseline values and risk associated with activities in and around the Great Lakes for Canada and the U.S. should not be directly compared and also with those provided in the extant literature due to methodological differences which limits comparability. Nonetheless, in the absence of more/better data, this study made an effort in identifying the value of certain activities in and around the Great Lakes in Canada and the U.S. and the value of what might potentially be lost by the presence of Grass Carp.

The most notable obstacles in quantifying the values identified in the study were: (i) lack of Great Lakes specific information by activity; and (ii) lack of a direct link between ecological and socio-economic impacts, which could be applied to assess socio-economic impacts more accurately in a quantitative manner. ✧

Northern pike anglers and spearers gearing up for winter action, new regulations

As cold temperatures begin to make ice on Minnesota lakes, ice anglers and spearers are gearing up for winter fishing action. For many, winter is a time to seek out the eager-to-bite northern pike. This will be the first ice fishing season of new northern pike zone regulations throughout Minnesota, according to the Department of Natural Resources.

The new regulations went into effect in May 2018 and created three distinct zones. While not designed to manage for trophy pike, the new regulations are meant to move pike populations to a larger size more desired for table fare, particularly in the southern and north-central zones.

The move toward new regulations was a response to anglers' concerns about the over-abundance of small, hammer-handle pike in much of central to north-central Minnesota; the low numbers of pike in southern waters; and a desire to protect large pike in the northeastern part of the state.

North-central zone

- Anglers: Limit of 10 northern pike, but no more than two pike longer than 26"; all from 22 to 26" must be released.
- Spearers: Limit of 10 northern pike, only one between 22-26" and 1 over 26; or, only two over 26.

Northeast zone

- Anglers: Limit of two pike; anglers must release all from 30 to 40", with only one over 40" allowed in possession.
- Spearers: Limit of two pike; only one northern pike over 26".

South zone

- Anglers and spearers: Limit of two pike; minimum size 24".

The new northern pike regulations apply to inland waters but do not affect border waters or individual lakes, rivers and streams that have their own special regulations for northern pike. Special pike regulations are in place on about 95 waters and always take precedence over statewide regulations. Anglers

and spearers should always research the lake they are fishing and must be prepared to reliably measure their fish. Waters with special regulations are identified in the fishing regulations booklet and with signs posted at public accesses.

"Family photo albums almost always include an old photo of someone with a large pike in their hands and family recipes for pickled northern are often considered prized secrets," said Rick Guertin of the Minnesota Darkhouse and Angling Association. "The new zone regulations are a big step forward in improving the northern pike sizes in our waters and maybe restoring an interest in pike fishing while also preserving those opportunities for the next generation."

Northern pike are found in nearly every Minnesota lake and stream. Pike are voracious predators that are relatively easy to catch because they willingly bite shiny lures and live bait, such as minnows. Their sharp teeth can easily cut fishing line so many anglers use a steel leader ahead of their hook so they don't have to re-tie hooks, jigs or lures. Early ice often is the best time to go as the fish seem to be more active, and it's easier to cut the hole in the ice. Look for moderately shallow water with aquatic vegetation close by for the best action for pike.

New anglers often shy away from harvesting northern pike because of their reputation as a difficult fish to fillet because of their Y bones. Dozens of instructional videos, often created by Minnesota resort owners and anglers, are available on YouTube and can be a great source for techniques to easily remove the Y bones from northern pike.

For more information about the new zone regulations, visit mndnr.gov/pike or contact a local area fisheries office. Contact information can be found in the fishing regulations booklet, available online at mndnr.gov/regulations/fishing. ✧

Ohio's recreational trails receive more than \$1.5 million

Twelve trails in Ohio have been selected to share in \$1,563,354 in federal funds through the Recreational Trails Program (RTP).

"By investing in Ohio's trails, our communities provide a great opportunity for everyone to enjoy and explore the outdoor spaces they have near their own front door," said ODNR Director James Zehringer. "Studies continue to show that trails keep growing in popularity, and programs like RTP are a great way to give back to the families who want to explore their neighborhoods."

According to the results from Ohio's 2018 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), trails are highly popular with the survey respondents, and RTP is a successful way to maintain and add new trails across the state.

RTP funding goes to projects that create and maintain trails and trail support facilities, improve access for people with disabilities, and provide education about trail safety and the environment. Applications for funding are evaluated using criteria such as need for the trail, public participation during design and trail linkages.

ODNR administers the RTP grant program, which funds non-motorized and motorized trails. RTP is a reimbursement program that provides up to 80% of a project's funding. ODNR received 42 RTP grant applications, and awarded funding to 12 projects statewide. More than 354 local trail projects across the state have received more than \$30 million in federal funds through ODNR since RTP began in 1993.

Funding for RTP comes from the U.S. Federal Highway Administration and a portion of the federal motor fuel excise tax collected from non-highway recreational fuel use. To see which recreational trails will receive grant funding, go to realestate.ohiodnr.gov/outdoor-recreation-facility-grants. ✧

Becoming an Outdoors-Woman program offers winter sports workshop in Ontonagon County

The Michigan DNR is offering a weekend winter sports workshop for women amid the breathtaking beauty of Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park.

The workshop, offered through the DNR's Becoming an Outdoors-Woman program, is scheduled for the weekend of **January 25-27**. The outing is for women who have some previous experience and would like to expand on their skills and abilities.

Participants should bring ice-fishing gear, snowshoes, cross-country skis, a headlamp and outdoor gear appropriate for winter weather. There is a downhill ski resort, so attendees also may want to bring downhill skis.

Workshop attendees who would like to fish will need to bring a fishing license or purchase one prior to arrival. The cost is \$26 for an annual license, or \$10 for a 24-hour license. Fishing licenses are available at a range of retail outlets or online at mdnr-elicence.com. Participants also will need to secure their own Recreation Passport for entry into the state park.

Participants will meet at the Kaug Wudjoo Lodge on Friday afternoon/evening for two nights of lodging. The lodge is located near the east entry to the park and Union Bay. Instructors will be on site beginning at 2 p.m. Dinner will be provided by the instructors Friday evening. The lodge has a full kitchen, allowing participants to prepare meals on site for the remainder of the event.

Participants must be 18 or older. Enrollment is limited to 10. **The deadline for registration is January 7, 2019.** Class information and registration materials are available online at michigan.gov/bow. This will be a rain, shine or snow event.

For more info: Michelle Zellar, 906-293-5131 or DNRBOW@michigan.gov ✧

Winter BOW program in the U.P. **Feb. 22-24**

The Michigan DNR registration is open for this winter's "Becoming an Outdoors Woman" program, which is set for **February 22-24** in Marquette County. This annual winter BOW gathering is for women, 18 and older, who are seeking an opportunity to improve their outdoor skills in a relaxed, noncompetitive atmosphere.

"Registration for this popular program always fills up fast, so don't delay," said Michelle Zellar, BOW program coordinator. "We've had as many as 100 women attend the weekend's activities." The BOW program is sponsored by the DNR and offers instruction in more than a dozen different types of indoor and outdoor activities, including cross-country skiing, archery and arrow building, winter camping and shelter building, ice fishing, fly tying, winter biking, wilderness first aid, wood-burning, snowshoeing and more.'

Instructors provide basic and advanced teaching tailored to each participant's individual ability. The program also includes special evening programs during the weekend. BOW participants stay and take their classes at the Bay Cliff Health Camp, a universally accessible facility overlooking Lake Superior, which is situated about 30 miles north of Marquette near Big Bay.

Participants will be housed in a dorm-style facility with amenities including a sauna and hiking trails with access to northern hardwood forests and Lake Superior. The \$200 registration fee includes all food and lodging, as well as most equipment and supplies, except as noted in the registration materials. Scholarships are also available on a limited basis.

Class information, registration materials and scholarship applications are available online to print at michigan.gov/bow. Payment and registration materials should be sent to the address on the registration paperwork in Newberry.

For more info: Michelle Zellar, 906-293-5131 or DNRBOW@michigan.gov ✧

Angler sets new Minnesota pike record

Minnesota anglers who want to catch a state record northern pike now have a new mark to beat after angler Matthew Swanson of Woodbury has claimed the record with a 45¼" northern pike caught on the Rainy River. The record surpasses the first ever record set in early October when Maddy Ogg caught and released a 43½" pike from Mille Lacs; however, Swanson reeled in his pike five months earlier, in May. The Department of Natural Resources received Swanson's application on October 29 and certified the fish soon after.



Swanson was on an annual Rainy River pike fishing trip with his dad and brother. Swanson reported that after three days of fishing, he had not landed any large pike, but his dad and brother had caught several over 30 inches. His father fishes spring pike with streamer flies on 30-pound test wire line. Using his dad's setup, Swanson took a few casts and the water around his fly exploded—he had hooked a big pike.

After a brief fight and some careful netting, Swanson had caught the 45¼" northern pike. They handled the large pike carefully to get a couple pictures and a length measurement before releasing the fish.

"Because this was to date my first and only pike on a fly, it was a very memorable experience," Swanson said.

Cool spring and fall temperatures make for excellent catch-and-release conditions. The DNR announces new state records in news releases, on social media and on the DNR website. Find current records and guidelines for each type of state record at mndnr.gov/recordfish. ✧

NY artificial reef program expands

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo recently deployed the first installation of recycled materials from the former Tappan Zee Bridge, as well as former Canal vessels, in the Shinnecock Reef, launching the Governor's initiative to significantly expand New York's network of artificial reefs. Announced in April, the [program](#) is poised to bolster 12 artificial reefs off the shores of Long Island—the largest expansion of artificial reefs in state history. The materials for the reef expansion will be strategically placed to improve New York's diverse marine life and boost Long Island's recreational, and sport fishing and diving industries. In addition to the inaugural expansion of the Shinnecock Reef, five additional reef sites will be enhanced this year at sites off the shores of Smithtown, Moriches, Fire Island, Hempstead, and Rockaway.

At the Governor's direction, and with unprecedented, multi-agency coordination, recycled materials from

the Department of Transportation, Canal Corporation, and the Thruway Authority will be used to develop New York's artificial reef sites and increase the biodiversity of these habitats for a variety of fish and lobsters. Construction of New York's first artificial reef dates back to 1949, and this latest initiative marks the state's first coordinated effort to stimulate the full environmental and economic benefits of artificial reefs.

A total of 1,093.2 tons of materials were added to the Shinnecock Reef. Barges dropped 885 tons of clean, recycled Tappan Zee Bridge material, as well as deconstructed New York State Department of Transportation project materials, including:

- 35 tons of triangular trusses
- 100 tons of concrete deck panels
- 750 tons of steel foundation pipes
- 6 tons of steel lattice trusses
- 13.1 tons of pieces of steel sheeting
- 37 tons of steel beams
- 13.8 tons of steel columns

- 9.4 tons of steel girders
- 0.9 tons of steel channels
- 128 tons of steel pipes

In addition, the state placed three decommissioned Canal boats at the reef, including a 110-foot barge, 74-foot tugboat, and 40-foot tender. The 35-acre reef is located two nautical miles from shore and is 85 feet deep at its deepest point.

===New York's marine resources are critical to the state's economy, supporting nearly 350,000 jobs and generating billions of dollars through tourism, fishing and other industries. More than 500,000 anglers in the region will reap the benefits of this initiative, supporting the region's growing marine economy which accounts for approximately 9.7 percent of Long Island's total GDP.

These artificial reefs are an investment in a stronger, more diverse marine ecosystem that will bolster the economy and bring a new purpose to the former Tappan Zee Bridge that will continue to serve New Yorkers for generations to come. ✧

CCRKBA seeks SCOTUS review of Mance interstate handgun sales case

The Citizens Committee for the Right to Keep and Bear Arms has petitioned the Supreme Court of the United States for review of its case challenging the long-standing ban on interstate handgun sales to citizens from other states.

The case, known as *Mance v. Whitaker*, comes out of the Fifth Circuit and involves a Texas firearms retailer and two would-be customers who reside in Washington, D.C. A federal district court earlier ruled that the interstate handgun transfer ban is facially unconstitutional, which was reversed by a Fifth Circuit panel. The Fifth Circuit denied the petition for rehearing en banc by a fractured vote of 8-7. Plaintiffs in the case include CCRKBA, Andrew and Tracy Hanson of Washington, D.C. and Texas firearms retailer Fredric Mance. They are represented by attorney Alan Gura.

“The ban on interstate handgun sales was adopted decades ago,” noted CCRKBA Chairman Alan Gottlieb, “prior to the advent of the National Instant Check System that is now in place. The Hansons have essentially been denied the ability to legally purchase a handgun from a licensed retailer because of this prohibition.

“But our case goes to the heart of what appears to be a reluctance in the lower courts to enforce the Second Amendment even now, more than ten years after the landmark *Heller* ruling and eight years after the *McDonald* ruling,” he continued. “This continuing problem is mentioned in our petition to the high court.

Funding support for this lawsuit is provided by the Second Amendment Foundation, which is CCRKBA's sister organization and specializes in education and litigation.

“This case has been in the system for quite some time,” Gottlieb noted. “We're hopeful that the Supreme Court, with its new makeup, will grant our request for review.”

With more than 650,000 members and supporters nationwide, the Citizens Committee for the Right to Keep and Bear Arms is one of the nation's premier gun rights organizations. As a non-profit organization, the Citizens Committee is dedicated to preserving firearms freedoms through active lobbying of elected officials and facilitating grass-roots organization of gun rights activists in local communities throughout the United States. The Citizens Committee can be reached by phone at (425) 454-4911, on the Internet at www.ccrkba.org or by email to InformationRequest@ccrkba.org. ✧

DEC Campground Ambassador Program – 2nd year

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) announced the opening of the 2019 application period for the Campground Ambassador program as part of the state's Adventure NY initiative to connect more New Yorkers with the outdoors. Volunteer Campground Ambassadors support DEC campground staff in welcoming and assisting the millions of visitors that vacation in the Adirondack and Catskill parks each year. The program was introduced last year, and the first group of ambassadors was working in the field during Summer 2018.

DEC encourages New York residents who are passionate about camping and the outdoors to help introduce new campers to DEC facilities and other outdoor activities. Ambassadors also aid in connecting campers and day users to nature via environmentally themed activities and programming.

Ambassadors will serve two weeks, between July 1 and Labor Day or from Sept. 30 through Columbus Day. In consideration for services provided, a campsite will be provided for the duration of their stay at one of the participating locations.

To apply for the 2019 program, visit the [Campground Ambassador Application](#) website. Applications must be received by **Jan. 31, 2019**.

View full details of the program at [DEC's Campground Ambassador website](#) or call 518-457-2500 x1.

DEC operates 52 campgrounds and five day-use areas in the Adirondack and Catskill forest preserves. The summer camping season runs through the summer, with some facilities remaining open during fall foliage and hunting season.

For more info, visit DEC's website and go to the Camping link under the Outdoor Recreation section, or call DEC's Bureau of Recreation at 518-457-2500. To make reservations, call ReserveAmerica at 1-800-456-CAMP (2267) or visit the [ReserveAmerica](#) website. ✧

DEC continues Sauger restoration efforts

New York State sauger populations have severely declined. They are now considered "critically imperiled." DEC Bureau of Fisheries staff is conducting restoration efforts in the Allegheny River watershed and in Lake Champlain. Staff have been stocking sauger annually in the Allegheny watershed since 2014. These fish are surviving and growing well. Signs of spawning activity in the spring have also been observed. While these are encouraging signs, the stocking program will continue for several more years to achieve the goal of creating a self-sustaining population. Lake Champlain supported the last viable sauger population in New York State. DEC staff are currently developing a plan to restore the Lake Champlain population, as well. For more information on [sauger management](#), visit the DEC website. ✧



Ask Congress to send Target Practice and Marksmanship Training Support Act to the President's desk for signature.

The U.S. Senate and U.S. House are in the process of wrapping up the 115th Congress. The bipartisan [Target Practice and Marksmanship Training Support Act](#) has been reported out of the committees of jurisdiction in both the House and Senate this year and has passed both chambers in previous Congresses. Unfortunately, this universally supported and non-controversial legislation has yet to reach the President's desk. This measure is NSSF's number one legislative priority on sportsmen's issues. It would provide for increased access to public shooting ranges benefitting industry members and sportsmen alike without costing taxpayers a dime. ✧

DEC Summer Camp registrations open January 23

Online registration for DEC's 2019 Summer Camps program will open January 23, 2019, at 10:00 a.m. Applications should be submitted through the [online registration program](#). Register early since some of the weeks fill up quickly. [For more information](#), visit DEC's website or call 518-402-8014. The Summer Camps program offers week-long adventures in conservation education for children 11-17. DEC operates four residential camps for kids: Camp Colby in Saranac Lake (Franklin Cty); Camp DeBruce in Livingston Manor (Sullivan Cty); Camp Rushford in Caneadea (Allegheny Cty), and Pack Forest in Warrensburg (Warren Cty). ✧

Free fishing this February

Michigan's 2019 Winter Free Fishing Weekend will be held **February 16 and 17**. All fishing license fees are waived for two days with residents and out-of-state visitors allowed to enjoy fishing on all waters for all species during their respective open seasons. All other regulations still apply. Michigan.gov/freefishing ▶ ✧

Ontario launches new fish and wildlife licensing service

TORONTO – Ontario has launched a better way for hunters and anglers across the province to get their Outdoors Cards and hunting and fishing licensing products. The new licensing service is easy to use, with new mobile features and a single Outdoors Card. It can be accessed online at huntandfishontario.com, at participating ServiceOntario locations or at one of over 700 license issuers across the province. Use it now to purchase Outdoors Cards, fishing licenses and small game licenses. <http://www.ontario.ca/outdoorscard>. ✧

Hunting Season for Cormorants

Continued from page 1

The Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act currently prohibits anyone who kills game wildlife (including game birds), or who possesses game wildlife killed by hunting, from allowing that meat to spoil. Via this posting, the Ministry is also consulting on a proposal to amend the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act to add provisions so hunters could allow cormorant to spoil. This proposal would add provisions to the Act, so that persons who lawfully hunt (or possess) cormorants could be exempt from this requirement and would be subject to conditions that require the person to retrieve and dispose of the carcass. Should this proposal proceed, it may be accompanied by regulations to implement the exemption and requirements.

To accompany the proposed hunting seasons, the Ministry will implement a cormorant monitoring program to assess population status and trends. Monitoring of cormorants will allow the Ministry to assess the impacts of the hunting season and to adjust cormorant hunting regulations if necessary to address any concerns about population sustainability.

The Ministry intends to amend the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act and supporting regulations (including Ontario Regulation 670/98 Open Seasons, Ontario Regulation 665/98 Hunting) to implement the proposal should it proceed. No additional opportunity for comments will be provided. Read the full Government proposal: [https://ero.ontario.ca/notice/013-4124# Submit a comment](https://ero.ontario.ca/notice/013-4124#Submit_a_comment) ✧

Attention Veterans

Your VA Loan Benefit means you need as little as \$0 down to buy a home. Plus, the VA Loan has increased to up to \$453,100 financing for 2018. Use [Your VA Loan](#) to lock in a low rate now. Take Advantage of this Exclusive Military Benefit. ✧

Up to \$5 Million available for Great Lakes Restoration Projects

NOAA announced the availability up to \$5 million in 2019 Great Lakes Restoration Initiative funds to establish new multi-year partnerships to restore Great Lakes habitats. Proposals should focus on activities that will help delist Great Lakes Areas of Concern, and new this year, can also be focused on rebuilding native fish populations outside of Areas of Concern. Proposals are due February 4. Contact: Julie Sims.

Since 2010, NOAA has supported more than 60 projects through the [Great Lakes Restoration Initiative](#). These projects have restored more than 7,500 acres of habitat and opened almost 500 miles of stream for fish to access their habitat. **Proposals are due February 4, 2019.** NOAA will not accept proposals with a federal funding request of less than \$1,000,000 or more than \$40 million over a three year project period. For more information, visit the [2019 Great Lakes Restoration Initiative funding opportunity](#). ✧

Give the gift of a lifetime license

[Lifetime Licenses](#) are available to New York State residents who have resided in New York for at least 12 months prior to purchase ([proof of residency](#) required). Lifetime fishing, trapping or hunting licenses may be purchased at any [license-issuing agent](#), by phone (866-922-2257), or [online](#) with a current NYS DMV driver or non-driver ID containing a valid NYS address. Allow two weeks for delivery of Lifetime Licenses purchased online or by phone. These licenses are good for a lifetime (with appropriate [hunter/trapper education](#) requirements)—even if the holder is no longer a New York State resident. ✧

DNR seeking applicants for \$100,000 shooting range grants

The Minnesota DNR announced \$100,000 in matching shooting range grants is available to improve existing five-stand, pistol, rifle, skeet or trap ranges. The application period is now open and runs through **December 28**.

Grants, which require a 1:1 match, are available to clubs that allow members of the public to shoot at reasonable times and for reasonable fees. [Small grants](#) up to \$25,000 are available and applicants must provide current female participation data and show an intent to improve future diversity opportunities.

The \$100,000 that's available is from a \$2 million appropriation the state Legislature made in 2015 to help recreational shooting clubs develop or improve shooting sports facilities for public use, with an emphasis on enhancing participation opportunities for youth. Facilities that received a prior grant, have been paid, and whose contract is closed are eligible to apply for another grant. Facilities whose recent grant application is still open are not eligible to apply for another grant.

The DNR will accept applications past December 28, but projects that meet the deadline will be considered first. ✧

New DFO Mobile App helps protect against Invasive Species

Fisheries and Oceans Canada launched the new **Baitfish Primer mobile app** which allows anglers, hobbyists and cottagers to easily identify which baitfishes are legal to use in Ontario's waters. Ensuring live bait is neither an invasive species that could damage the ecosystem, nor a species at risk, is a critical element in protecting the Great Lakes and all Ontario waterways.

It works in all waters. Compatible with iOS or Android devices, the **Baitfish Primer App** is free to download from [Google Play](#) or the [App Store](#). ✧

DNR urges extreme caution on early ice, around cold water

Anglers in Minnesota have begun making their first forays onto hard water, but ice conditions statewide – and even on the same body of water – remain extremely variable. DNR Safety officials remind people to stay off the ice until there's at least 4 inches of new, clear ice. And they should be vigilant about safety and check conditions at least every 150 feet whenever they're on the ice.

"No fish is worth the risk of going through thin ice," said DNR conservation officer Adam Block. "At this point, it is going to take several consecutive days of below-freezing temperatures before enough solid ice has formed to support foot traffic, and even longer before ATVs and snowmobiles should be on the ice."

Every year, unexpected falls through newly formed ice lead to tragedy. Of the six ice fatalities in 2017, five occurred during the early ice season of late November and early December.

"In addition to checking conditions locally and being prepared with an ice safety kit, anyone recreating on hard water should wear a life jacket," Block said. "It's the one piece of equipment that increases your odds of not drowning from cold water shock, hypothermia or exhaustion should you fall through the ice."

Last winter, all of the fatalities occurred while the victim was on an ATV or snowmobile. The extra weight of an ATV (especially the popular side-by-side styles) and snowmobile needs to be considered when calculating how much ice is needed to support the machines, gear and passengers.

Open-water danger

In addition to early ice, there are water bodies that still have open water accessible to late-season anglers, boaters and paddlers.

"Air temperatures might be relatively mild, but don't let that deceive you," said Lisa Dugan, DNR recreation safety outreach

coordinator. "Water temperatures are dangerously cold across the entire state, which means it's more important than ever to wear that life jacket. "A fall into extremely cold water can incapacitate you within seconds."

[State statistics](#) show one-third of boating fatalities typically occur during the "cold water season." Of the 14 reported boating fatalities in 2018, all victims were male and all but one was found without a life jacket.

"This is a troubling trend - one that will only be reversed if boaters in that high-risk demographic choose to put safety first by wearing their life jacket," Dugan said.

General ice safety guidelines

No ice can ever be considered "safe ice," but following [these guidelines](#) can help minimize the risk:

- Always wear a life jacket or float coat on the ice (except when in a vehicle).
- Carry ice picks, rope, an ice chisel and tape measure.
- Check ice thickness at regular intervals; conditions can change quickly.
- Bring a cell phone or personal locator beacon.
- Don't go out alone; let someone know about trip plans and expected return time.
- Before heading out, inquire about conditions and known hazards with local experts.

The minimum ice thickness guidelines for new, clear ice are:

- 4 inches for ice fishing or other activities on foot.
- 5-7 inches for a snowmobile or all-terrain vehicle.
- 8-12 inches for a car or small pickup.
- 12-15 inches for a medium truck.
- Double these minimums for white or snow-covered ice.

For more information, visit mndnr.gov/icesafety and mndnr.gov/boatingsafety. ✧

On thin ice – teach kids the dangers of ice

Now is the time to talk with kids about the dangers of ice. Ice thickness varies greatly on lakes, ponds and rivers. Some water bodies have none, while others have several inches say DNR officials.

"Ice, especially early ice with snow cover, is extremely deceptive because you can't see dangerous cracks or the thickness of the ice under the snow," said DNR Conservation Officer Adam Block. "Parents need to teach their kids that ice is never 100 percent safe. If your child is near the ice, you should be near your child."

With many children out of school for holiday breaks, they may look toward newly forming ice for entertainment.

"In addition to checking conditions locally and being prepared with an ice safety kit, anyone recreating on ice should be wearing a life jacket or float coat," said Lisa Dugan, DNR recreation safety outreach coordinator. "A life jacket is the one piece of equipment that increases your odds of not drowning from cold water shock, hypothermia or exhaustion should you fall through the ice." ✧

Youth Goose Hunt

Youth interested in participating in the annual Central Illinois Youth Goose Hunt, sponsored by the IDNR, can register now for the hunt, scheduled for **[January 20-21, 2019](#)**. To register for a drawing to participate in the hunt, phone 217-785-8060 by the **[registration deadline of Friday, Dec. 28](#)**. The youth goose hunt will be held at private waterfowl hunting clubs in the Canton area in Fulton Co. A lottery drawing involving all youth who phone in to register will be conducted on January 2, 2019, and youth hunters selected will be notified by mail. First-time applicants will be given a priority over previous participants in the drawing. The hunt is open to youngsters ages 10-17 at the time of the hunt. ✧

Updated Plan to Stop Asian Carp

November 21, 2018 – Ann Arbor, MI – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has released its final draft plan to keep Asian carp out of the Great Lakes. The draft chief’s report of the Brandon Road Lock and Dam includes both structural and nonstructural measures including an engineered lock fitted with an electric barrier, a bubble barrier, an acoustic barrier, and a flushing lock to stop aquatic invasive species like Asian carp, while maintaining navigation for shipping.

Six alternatives were formulated and evaluated. Each alternative is described in detail in the final report documents. The Recommended Plan is the alternative that reduces the risk of Mississippi River Basin ANS establishment in the Great Lakes

Basin to the maximum extent possible while minimizing impacts to waterway uses and users.

Based on the results of the evaluation and comparison of the alternatives, the Recommended Plan is the Technology Alternative – Acoustic Fish Deterrent with Electric Barrier, which includes the following measures: nonstructural measures, acoustic fish deterrent, air bubble curtain, engineered channel, electric barrier, flushing lock and boat launches. The goal will be to optimize alternative effectiveness while minimizing safety impacts.

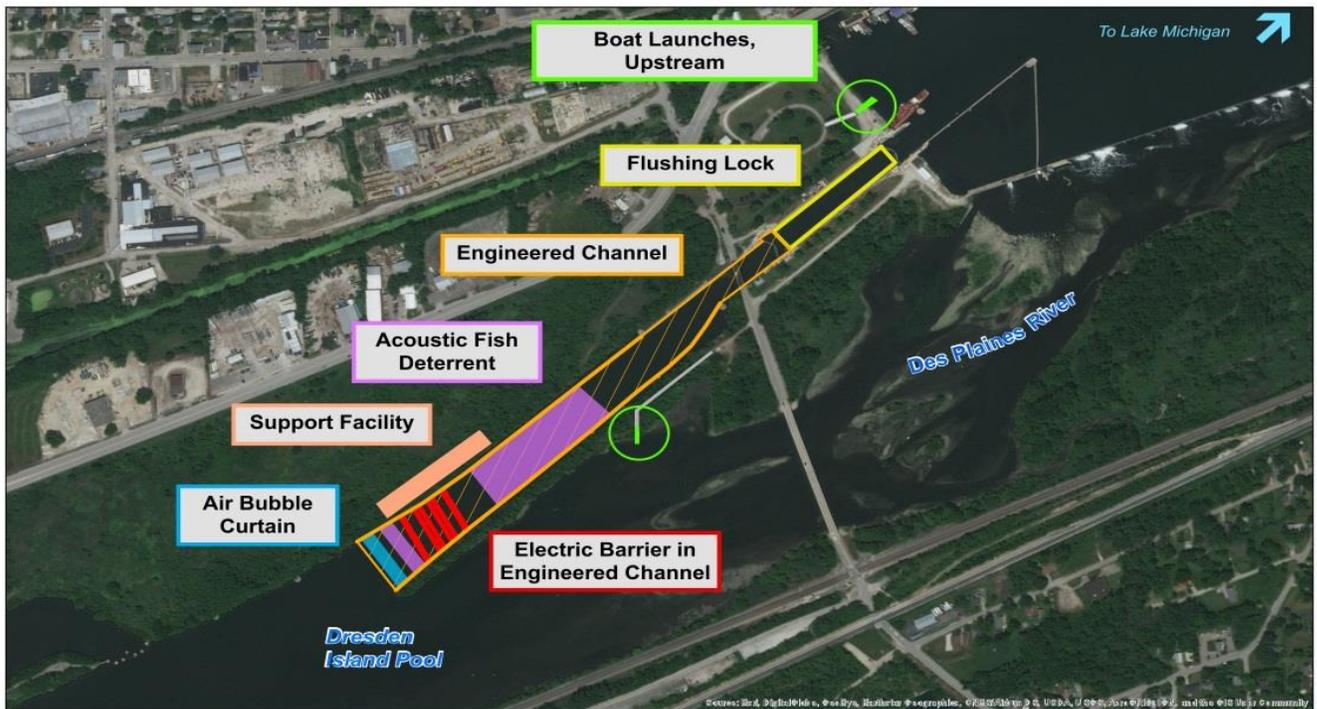
The map below shows locations of key features, or measures, of the Recommended Plan at Brandon Road Lock and Dam. **Descriptions of nonstructural and structural**

control measures included in the Recommended Plan follow

The Brandon Road Lock and Dam is located just south of Chicago and is a critical chokepoint to help stop Asian carp from continuing to swim closer to Lake Michigan. The estimated cost of the project is \$777.8 million, up from an earlier estimate of \$275 million. A previous draft of the plan included water jets in place of the bubble barrier.

The review period began on November 23, 2018, and ends on December 24, 2018.

Summary of plan: <https://www.mvr.usace.army.mil/Missions/Environmental-Protection-and-Restoration/GLMRIS-BrandonRoad/>





As we reflect on 2018, our soldiers on active duty around the world, our country and its leaders, our own safety, our health, family and all we have to be grateful for...our best wishes for a very Merry Christmas and blessed and wonderful New Year in 2019.

"...behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour..." Luke 2:10-11

Merry Christmas
and
best wishes for a safe and
Happy New Year

Other Breaking News Items:**(Click on title or URL to read full article)****[Environmental changes are killing the livelihood of Great Lakes fishermen](#)**

Indigenous fishermen in Ontario's Bruce Peninsula are unable to support themselves through fishing due to drastic declines in fish population. These fishermen are now teaming up to collect data about the changing environment to document these losses

[Great Lakes Compact Council approves changes to rules guiding water diversions](#)

The council overseeing the Great Lakes Compact approved changes Thursday on how proposed Great Lakes water withdrawals are reviewed and how council decisions are appealed

[Trump signs bill with invasive species provisions for Great Lakes](#)

President Donald Trump signed a new law that will create national new ballast water rules to protect the Great Lakes from invasive species. The law also creates a new EPA invasive species Great Lakes monitoring program.

[Great Lakes Fishery Commission rep says Asian carp plan needs to go forward](#)

Despite rising cost estimates from U.S. federal planners, Great Lakes Fishery Commission Communications Director Marc Gaden says the plan to prevent invasive Asian carp from getting into the Great Lakes needs to move forward.

[A controversial fishing style: Snagging for salmon in Chicago harbors](#)

From Oct. 1 - Dec. 31, fishermen in Illinois are allowed to use a specific technique to catch salmon that's banned in several other states. Called snagging, the practice is used to catch salmon swimming into Chicago-area harbors from Lake Michigan

['Carp cowboys' round up invasive Asian carp as Illinois, federal officials debate costly measures to protect Lake Michigan](#)

While state and federal officials debate costly preventive measures to keep Asian carp out of the Great lakes, teams of commercial fishermen contracted by the State of Illinois have led the effort to remove carp from the Illinois River.

[Asian carp threat stymies plans for fish passage on 100-year-old Wisconsin River dam](#)

A plan to improve fish populations by letting them swim through a Wisconsin River dam has languished for years as officials wrestle with the possibility that Asian carp could also unwittingly slip through

[This Montreal borough wants to install heated sidewalks instead of using salt](#)

A city councilor for the Côte Saint-Luc borough in Montreal, Quebec is proposing heated sidewalks over salt for winter conditions, citing the rising price and environmental impacts of salt

[Saving Milwaukee's birds, one window at a time](#)

Milwaukee, Wis. is directly in the flight path of migrating birds whose flyway is parallel to Lake Michigan, which means Milwaukee is a dangerous city for bird strikes into windows. Scientists at the U. of Wisconsin-Milwaukee are working to

[Michigan Senate to consider Straits oil pipeline legislation](#)

Legislation poised to advance in Michigan's Senate would authorize the Mackinac Bridge Authority to help implement a deal to replace twin oil pipelines in a crucial Great Lakes channel.

[Pharmaceuticals, illegal drugs showing up in zebra and quagga mussels](#)

Zebra and quagga mussels may be invasive species, but their ability to accumulate contaminants in their tissues makes them excellent study subjects. NOAA is using invasive mussels as part of a national effort to study chemical pollution, called Mussel

[Can you walk the beach? Supreme Court may decide](#)

Two Michigan groups are urging the U.S. Supreme Court to take up an Indiana case that would determine if lakefront property rights extend all the way to the water. If the court considers the issue, it has the potential to redefine where people can and can't

[Feathered pariah: Inland Seas hosts program on double-crested cormorants](#)

Of all the birds in the Upper Great Lakes region, perhaps the double-crested cormorant is the most controversial. An event in Suttons Bay, Michigan, will explore the various perspectives on the bird

[A resilient Lake Erie solidifies its title as the Walleye Capital of the World](#)

The final results are in from trawling surveys of young-of-the-year walleye done in August in Ohio and Ontario. This year's walleye hatch was record-setting, guaranteeing Lake Erie anglers a decade of fabulous fishing.

End