

**Michigan Department of Natural Resources,  
Wildlife Division**

**Deer Range Improvement Program:**

**2021 Upper Peninsula**

***Deer Habitat Improvement  
Partnership Initiative***

**Grant Program**



Prepared by:

Bill Scullon, Upper Peninsula Region Field Operations Manager

Jayne Roohr, Wildlife Technician

**Michigan Department of Natural Resources,  
Wildlife Division, Deer Range Improvement Program**

**2021 Upper Peninsula**

**Deer Habitat Improvement Partnership Initiative**

## Contents

2021 Upper Peninsula .....	1
<i>Deer Habitat Improvement Partnership Initiative</i> .....	1
Grant Program .....	1
1.1 Initiative goals and expectations: .....	3
1.2 Project concept development: .....	3
1.3 Initiative funding: .....	4
1.4 Project implementation and grant process: .....	4
1.5 Eligible land ownerships: .....	5
1.6 Eligible partners: .....	5
1.7 Eligible proposal types: .....	6
1.8 Communications strategy: .....	7
1.9 Public notification process and application timeline: .....	7
2.0 Required application information: .....	8
2.1 Proposal selection process: .....	8
2.2 Proposal criteria and scoring: .....	8
2.3 Compliance monitoring and final initiative reporting: .....	9
2.4 Wildlife Division Upper Peninsula / DHIPI Wildlife Biologist Contact List .....	10
Appendix A .....	11

# Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Wildlife Division

## Deer Range Improvement Program

### 2021 Deer Habitat Improvement Partnership Initiative

#### Program description:

The Deer Habitat Improvement Partnership Initiative (DHPI) is a grant program designed to foster productive relationships between the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, sportsperson's organizations, interested citizens and other partners to produce tangible deer habitat improvements and educate the public about the importance of the habitat work accomplished through the grant and the scientific principles involved in it. The Initiative focuses on completing deer habitat improvements in the Upper Peninsula.

This document is designed as a guide for use by applicants and intended to provide basic information on initiative goals, proposal requirements, eligibility rules, grant application process, proposal criteria and selection process, funding, and the implementation process.

#### 1.1 Initiative goals and expectations:

The purpose of this Initiative is to develop a collaborative approach to deer habitat improvement on **private land ownerships** across the Upper Peninsula; there are three primary goals for this Initiative. All projects should address these fundamental goals to be considered for funding:

1. Produce on-the-ground deer habitat (summer and/or winter range) improvements in the Upper Peninsula that address resource needs.
2. Establish and promote partnerships between the DNR, sportsmen's organizations, and other partners.
3. Showcase these cooperative projects through a coordinated public outreach effort, highlighting the relationship between the DNR and Partners while educating the public on the benefits of habitat improvements made through the grant.

The DNR welcomes diverse and non-traditional conservation and outdoor recreation organizations who may not have a deer focus to apply. The DNR recognizes that managing ecosystems and local habitat resources for a variety of wildlife values typically will benefit deer and project proposals can be tailored accordingly to be successful.

#### 1.2 Project concept development:

Prospective habitat improvement projects will be developed by partner organizations through the application process as outlined in this document. These project proposals should be generated by eligible partners (see section 1.6 for eligible partner definition) for implementation on lands of eligible ownership.

It is encouraged that collaborative interactions occur between the respective local DNR wildlife biologist and the partner organization throughout proposal development.

### **1.3 Initiative funding:**

All Initiative activities will operate on the State of Michigan's fiscal year calendar, October 1 through September 30. Initiative funding is from an annual Deer Range Improvement Program (DRIP) fund appropriation. Public Act 106 of 1971 created the DRIP fund, whereby \$1.50 from every deer hunting license sold statewide is allocated into a restricted fund to be exclusively used for the improvement and maintenance of habitat for deer, acquisition of land for deer management, and the payment in lieu of taxes on purchased lands.

DRIP funds will be used to finance this Initiative through competitive grants. Your group may be required to initially incur the expenses associated with implementing the project and submit invoices (with organization name and contact information) for reimbursement (save all original receipts).

For 2021 the total value of DRIP funds made available through this competitive grant application process is \$100,000.00. **The maximum allowable limit for deer habitat improvement grants is \$15,000.00 with the minimum at \$2,000.00.** Funds will be awarded across the entire Upper Peninsula based on a competitive grant application scoring process.

To be eligible for consideration, all projects must meet the three Initiative goals. Projects that may require repeat applications for funding over multiple years will be considered but will be limited to the above funding limitations per fiscal year unless there is leftover funding available within the current fiscal year. In the case of multiple-year projects, scheduled deliverables will be required to occur within the fiscal year deadlines as defined within the Agreement Contract and grant disbursement rules.

### **1.4 Project implementation and grant process:**

It is the responsibility of the partner organization to undertake the primary role in implementation of approved grant projects. Partnering organizations will need to actively participate in the project through financial match, cost share, volunteer labor, material contributions, or other in-kind support. **The required partner cost share for approved projects is 25% of the total project cost.** Proposed partner cost share and additional contributions to projects will be considered in the scoring process.

Approved grant projects will require the partnering organization or their representative to be Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) compliant and a registered vendor of the State of Michigan's SIGMA system. Registration through the SIGMA process is available online at [www.michigan.gov/sigmavss](http://www.michigan.gov/sigmavss). This will be necessary to facilitate transfer of grant funds from the DNR to an approved partner or other service provider. The EFT process will generate a W-9 and 1099 tax form for the approved organization, as required for grant funds by law.

Successful applicant organizations and participating landowners will be required to sign a contractual DHIPI Agreement and liability release prior to any implementation. This agreement will specify the project deliverables, define partner responsibilities, and stipulate the minimum duration the project is to be maintained by the applicant. Additionally, successful applicant organizations will need to complete a Partner Organization Grants Account form. Scheduled release of grant funds will occur after deliverables/objectives have been completed successfully as defined in the DHIPI Agreement. Under some circumstances partial prepayment of grant funds may be approved depending on the financial nature and time scale of the proposed project.

Failure to meet project obligations or noncompliance as spelled out in the project contractual agreement will result in project termination and ineligibility for future applications.

### **1.5 Eligible land ownerships:**

In 2021 the focus of DHIPI funds will continue to be improving deer habitat on rural forested lands where the DNR has not traditionally had significant wildlife habitat influence. Therefore, DHIPI projects **may occur on** privately owned lands (partner must provide written proof of ownership), industrial forest or Commercial Forest Act (CFA) or Qualified Forest Program (QFP) enrolled lands (with appropriate written permission from landowner), Tribal owned lands (with appropriate written permission of tribal authority), federal lands (with appropriate written permission of federal administrator), or other lands with perpetual conservation mandates.

Lands zoned primarily as business, industrial, agricultural, or within incorporated areas are ineligible. While not required, public access to projects is highly desired. Projects with provisions that allow legal public access (minimum of foot traffic) for hunting and fishing will benefit in the project scoring process. The DNR or the State of Michigan will not assume indemnification for liability involving projects undertaken on non-state-owned lands.

**State owned lands are not eligible** for Initiative funding in 2021. Currently there are existing mechanisms for partnerships between the DNR and external partners to enhance state land wildlife habitat. If you are interested in partnering on state lands, you should contact the respective local wildlife biologist or forester to explore project options.

### **1.6 Eligible partners:**

Given the limited funding, the expansiveness of the Upper Peninsula, and the desire to utilize these grant funds as effectively as possible, private individuals are **not** eligible to apply directly for the grant at this time. However, if a private landowner has their property enrolled in the Qualified Forest Program or Commercial Forest Act then they are eligible.

An application may be submitted by a conservation organization, sportsperson group, non-governmental organizations, land conservancies, Commercial Forest Act or Qualified Forest Program enrollees and/or local Conservation Districts. Additionally, industrial working forest landowners with Upper Peninsula ownership more than 10,000 acres are eligible to participate

directly. Wildlife land management service providers are eligible to apply on behalf of an eligible landowner/partner.

Additionally, formal private land affiliations have been added to the list of eligible partners. For the purpose of this Initiative a formal private land affiliation is a group of 2 or more unrelated individuals who collectively own a legally recognized (i.e. plat book designation) block of contiguous, rural land, 400 acres or larger for the purpose of wildlife-based recreation. Joint or common tenancy may be considered eligible ownership provided the land is managed collectively for wildlife-based recreation purposes and meets all other requirements. Non-legally binding or collectives of adjacent landowners are considered ineligible. Family (direct and extended) owned lands are also considered ineligible.

In addition to private individuals, unrecognized organizations, cities, municipalities, townships, counties, tribal governments, and federal or other state governmental entities/agencies are all ineligible to directly apply for funding. The intent of this program is to provide funding to local groups for conservation action. Interested governmental entities may be third party cooperators for approved projects where appropriate (i.e. as cooperating landowners on which projects can occur or as contributing partners).

Conservation organizations may be Upper Peninsula based or local chapters of state, regional or national groups. Eligible applicants must provide a federal tax number or social security number in order register with the State of Michigan to facilitate grant funding. A partner organization must name a project contact person/representative and include appropriate contact information on the application. Eligible partner organizations may apply for funding for multiple projects in a fiscal year, each of which will be evaluated independently. Eligible partner organizations may not apply for funding for unspecified projects or purposes. DHIPI applications are not mutually exclusive with other DNR grant programs.

### **1.7 Eligible proposal types:**

Organizations considering participation in this Initiative are encouraged to contact their local wildlife biologist or the private land biologist to collaboratively develop project proposals.

Examples of activities proposals may include are: wildlife shrub plantings, tree plantings (i.e. oak or other hard mast species, fruit bearing or other soft mast species, winter cover conifers such as white pine, hemlock, or cedar), scarification for regeneration of light-seeded tree species, non-commercial timber stand improvement activities, direct mechanical habitat manipulation (i.e. regeneration of aspen or alder habitat), wildlife opening creation or maintenance, plantings of non-invasive herbaceous grasses and forbs, approved warm/cool season grasses, and native prairie herbaceous plantings.

Proposals which involve eligible partners who sponsor or engage in similar habitat improvement projects on multiple eligible landowner types within a region or defined geographic area are eligible provided there are: clear habitat goals; landowner selection criteria; and project methods are consistent with DHIPI intent.

Specific activities that will **not** be considered are plantings of annual species such as corn or root crops; exotics or invasive species; non-DNR approved naturalized plant species; commercial timber sale preparation, and construction of ponds. Proposals will not be considered if they would increase undesired habitat fragmentation; increase wildlife disease transmission potential; have human safety implications; are contrary to current DNR policy and opinion; counter to Best Management Practices, or have adverse impacts on state or federally listed threatened and endangered species.

To aid applicants in developing cost effective proposals, it is suggested they refer to Michigan State University Extension's most recent [Custom Machine and Work Rate Estimates worksheet](http://bit.ly/ratesworksheet) for current values on standard farming practices that may be applicable at:  
<http://bit.ly/ratesworksheet>

### **1.8 Communications strategy:**

Required for each approved project is a planned communications strategy. Developing the rough framework for this strategy is the responsibility of the partnering organization and is required to be outlined in the application. This framework should include a detailed description of how the public will be informed of the intended deer and other wildlife habitat benefits, the project location, a detailed description of the proposed habitat enhancement activities, any public education plans, all project cooperators, and the funding sources. It should also include any specific plans for site signage, local newsprint, radio, television, other media outreach, and list of likely local media contacts. The partnering organization must be prepared to be an active participant in outreach efforts.

Development of the final communications strategy for projects is expected to be a cooperative venture between the partnering organization and the DNR. Coordination and public delivery of the communications message will be conducted by the DNR.

### **1.9 Public notification process and application timeline:**

In 2021 the following Initiative timeline is being pursued:

- **January 28, 2021 (Thursday) – Initiative Requests for Projects (RFP) application period opens** including a direct mailing of application packages to an existing list of UP sportsperson organizations and live web posting.
- **March 12, 2021 (Friday) - Final application deadline (close of business day).**
- **April 1, 2021 (Thursday) - Notification to successful applicants.** Implementation of approved projects will commence immediately upon completion of contract and agreement paperwork.

[Complete application packages](#) including: application forms, Initiative description and requirements, and related materials are available online at [www.michigan.gov/dnr-grants](http://www.michigan.gov/dnr-grants) then following the [Deer Habitat Improvement Partnership Initiative link](#). Packages are also available

upon request from Bill Scullon, Field Operations Manager, Department of Natural Resources, Norway Field Office, 520 West US Hwy 2, Norway MI 49870, telephone 906-563-9247, fax 906-563-5802 or email [Scullonh@michigan.gov](mailto:Scullonh@michigan.gov).

## **2.0 Required application information:**

**Applicant organizations must meet eligibility requirements and grant application forms must be filled out completely to be considered.** Potential partnering organizations must name a project contact person/representative and include appropriate contact information. Additional sheets may be attached to fully describe the proposed project in detail. It is strongly encouraged that applications be as detailed as possible since they will be evaluated competitively. The project proposal must provide: an itemized estimate of project costs, materials, and any other related expenditures including a detailed description of how the sponsoring organization plans to provide the required 25% project cost share, final grant amount requested, the legal location description of the project including GPS coordinates if applicable, acreage estimate to be impacted, and any relevant maps/air photos must be provided.

Written documentation of third-party landowner permission for the proposed activity must be included where necessary. Specific local recommendations for any contractual service providers should be included. Project proposals may undergo modification by the Selection Committee to ensure habitat practices are sound, to overcome logistical and feasibility issues, and follow union/labor agreements where applicable.

## **2.1 Proposal selection process:**

Immediately following the application deadline, a Selection Committee will review proposals and select projects to be funded. Examples of Selection Committee representatives may include: DNR personnel from Wildlife and Forest Resources Divisions, DNR Communications Specialists, DNR Private Land Program Biologists, and Natural Resource Commissioners as available.

The Selection Committee may approve, reject, or make modifications to project(s). Partners who submit projects that are not approved may seek feedback from the selection committee. All Selection Committee decisions will be final. The selection and project scoring process are designed to be standardized, treat all applicants fairly and be as transparent as possible.

## **2.2 Proposal criteria and scoring:**

Grant proposals will be evaluated for completeness, inclusion of all three primary Initiative goals, eligibility, and meeting the five proposal criteria. The Selection Committee will use scientific principles, professional experience, and judgment in numerically scoring proposals on a gradient scale of 1-5 used to evaluate the required proposal criteria. The lower the score for a requirement indicates a lower priority assessment. The final score for each application will be based on the combined scores of the five required proposal criteria. The maximum score a



proposal can receive is 25. The minimum scores a project can receive and still be considered eligible for funding is 12.

The five proposal evaluation criteria are presented in no order:

- Production of tangible deer habitat enhancements
- Proposal is logistically and scientifically feasible.
- Public accessibility and/or proximity to public lands.
- Partner will provide the required cost share and participation in the implementation of the project.
- The inclusion and completeness of a communications strategy.

For the 2021 DHIPI scoring process, special consideration will be given to applicants whom submitted a 2020 DHIPI grant proposal and would have been selected to receive funding had it not been for the grant program being suspended due to Governor Whitmer's Executive Directive-3 orders on March 30, 2020 which placed restrictions on the State's discretionary spending due to the COVID-19 Emergency. This disrupted awarding the DHIPI program funds which were scheduled to be announced on April 1, 2020. Of the applications received during the 2020 request for proposals period, 11 had scored sufficiently by the Selection Committee to receive partial or full grant awards. This information was not publicly disclosed nor conveyed to the 2020 applicants. For 2021 only, an extra 3 bonus points will be awarded to any of the 11 groups identified by the 2020 Selection Committee if submitting a similar proposal for the current grant cycle.

### **2.3 Compliance monitoring and final initiative reporting:**

For all approved projects, the partner's representative will be required to periodically report to the DNR Grant Administrator on the project status, expenditures to date, future objectives to be completed, and estimated timeline for completion throughout the implementation process (final deadline is September 30, 2021). DNR staff will be responsible for assessing whether the partner complied with the intended contract obligations, prior to final payment release.

Reimbursement for expenses approved through the grant will require submission of an itemized invoice on the organization's letterhead containing the date, contact information and SIGMA#. Copies of all invoices and bills must be submitted prior to any payment being made. At the completion of the project a final report must be submitted prior to final payment being made; electronic submissions of reports are acceptable.

In addition to the above invoicing instructions, the final project report should contain: a summary of financial accounting for the entire project, a final improved acreage estimate (GPS coordinates/or polygon), completed DNR Volunteer/In-Kind match tracking forms, photographs documenting the project from start to finish, a brief narrative describing the project and the outcome including a quote from the organization's representative for future use in DNR grant promotions, and a copy of any press or outreach materials generated by the partner organization to promote the project.

Following the completion of the project, periodic compliance monitoring by DNR personnel may take place for some time (as specified in contractual agreement) to determine if the partner organization fulfilled all requirements. The DNR reserves the right to access the project for compliance monitoring for the period specified in the contract agreement.

## **2.4 Wildlife Division Upper Peninsula / DHIPI Wildlife Biologist Contact List**

Bill Scullon, Field Operations Manager [Scullonh@michigan.gov](mailto:Scullonh@michigan.gov)  
Norway Field Office, 520 West US Hwy 2, Norway MI 49870. 906-563-9247

Brian Roell, Wildlife Biologist [Roellb@michigan.gov](mailto:Roellb@michigan.gov)  
Marquette Operations Service Center, 1990 US-41 South, Marquette MI 49855. 906-228-6561

John DePue, Wildlife Biologist [DePuej1@michigan.gov](mailto:DePuej1@michigan.gov)  
Baraga Operations Service Center, 427 US-41 North, Baraga MI 49908.  
906-353-6651

Monica Joseph, Wildlife Biologist [Josephm@michigan.gov](mailto:Josephm@michigan.gov)  
Crystal Falls Field Office, 1420 Highway US-2 West, Crystal Falls MI 49920. 906-875-6622

Karen Sexton, Wildlife Biologist [Sextonk2@michigan.gov](mailto:Sextonk2@michigan.gov)  
Escanaba Field Office, 6833 Hwy. 2, 41, and M-35, Gladstone MI 49837. 906-786-2351

Kristie Sitar, Wildlife Biologist [Sitark@michigan.gov](mailto:Sitark@michigan.gov)  
Newberry Field Office, P.O. Box 428, Newberry MI 49868. 906-293-5024

Dave Jentoft, Wildlife Biologist [Jentoftd@michigan.gov](mailto:Jentoftd@michigan.gov)  
Sault Ste. Marie Office, P.O. Box 798, Sault Ste. Marie MI 49783. 906-635-5281

Don Brown, Acting Wildlife Biologist [Brownd28@michigan.gov](mailto:Brownd28@michigan.gov)  
Cusino Field Office, P.O. Box 67, Shingleton MI 49884. 906-452-6236

**Appendix A**

**Michigan Department of Natural Resources  
Wildlife Division, 2021 Upper Peninsula  
Deer Habitat Improvement Partnership Initiative  
Grant Application Form**

**Organization information:**

Applicant organization name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip code: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact person / representative: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address if different from above: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip code: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Organization tax ID number: \_\_\_\_\_

**Proposed project location legal description:**

County: \_\_\_\_\_ Township: \_\_\_\_\_ Range: \_\_\_\_\_

Section(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Subsection(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Acreage: \_\_\_\_\_

GPS coordinates: \_\_\_\_\_

Landowner name: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip code: \_\_\_\_\_

Landowner email: \_\_\_\_\_

Landowner permission for project: \_\_\_\_\_ (attach copy of written permission)

**Proposal description:** Include detailed description of planned habitat improvement project and expected benefits (be specific as possible). List any additional parties to proposal (attach extra sheets & maps if necessary). Must include an estimated acreage to be improved or impacted.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**2021 Upper Peninsula Deer Habitat Improvement Partnership Initiative  
Grant Application Form (continued)**

**List specific proposal material needs:** Estimated itemized materials costs or requirements. Include any contractor recommendations or other needs (attach extra sheets if necessary). Be specific as possible. \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

---

\_\_\_\_\_ Estimated total proposal cost  
including cost share match: \$\_\_\_\_\_.  
Final project amount requested via grant: \$\_\_\_\_\_. \_\_\_\_\_

**List the proposal implementation plans including cost share:** Be specific as to who does what, when, and include specifics on how 25% cost share will be met (i.e. financial contribution, in-kind contributions, volunteer hours, materials, contractual labor, etc.) (Attach extra sheets as necessary). \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

---

\_\_\_\_\_ Estimated cost share match: \$\_\_\_\_\_. \_\_\_\_\_

**Proposal communication strategy:** Include specific plans for: signage, press or media contacts / organizations, text, and educational outreach (Attach extra sheets as necessary).

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Organizations representative signature**

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / 2021

**Completed applications must be postmarked by or received electronically by close of Business Friday, March 12, 2021.** Return to: Bill Scullon, Field Operations Manager, Department of Natural Resources, Norway Field Office, 520 West US Hwy 2, Norway MI 49870. For additional information, call (906) 563-9247, fax (906) 563-5802 or email [scullonh@michigan.gov](mailto:scullonh@michigan.gov).