



## STATE OF MICHIGAN

## DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

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GRETCHEN WHITMER  
GOVERNORM. SCOTT BOWEN  
DIRECTOR

Dear Upper Peninsula Wildlife Conservation Partner,

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Wildlife Division, is pleased to announce that the 2026 Deer Habitat Improvement Partnership Initiative (DHIIPI) grant program is again offered to the Upper Peninsula. This is a competitive grant, and proposals will be evaluated by the Selection Committee to award funds. The funding for the program comes from the Deer Range Improvement Program (DRIP) fund, generated from statewide deer hunting license fees.

**New for 2026, the total DHIIPI program budget has increased to \$200,000. The maximum and minimum grant requests have also increased respectively to a maximum of \$25,000 and a minimum of \$5,000. Required match remains at 25%. Further, applicants can now bundle multiple project proposals under one application instead of applying separately for each proposal, provided they stay below the maximum grant value. Applicants seeking maximum grant values can also request a two-year grant window to implement more complex projects. Applicants seeking a two-year window will need to explain their rationale for consideration, approval of the two-year grant implementation window is not automatic.**

Over the past 17 years Wildlife Division has invested over \$1,295,000.00 of license dollars on Upper Peninsula deer habitat improvements through the DHIIPI program. Thousands of acres of deer habitat have benefited from over 162 projects in nearly all Upper Peninsula counties. Partners have contributed nearly \$950,000 dollars in matching funds, helping to expand the benefits for wildlife and local communities.

**The request for proposals is open from Monday, January 26, 2026, and closes Friday, March 6, 2026.** There are three primary initiative goals all proposals must address: (1) to produce tangible deer habitat improvements. (2) to promote relationships between the DNR, sportsperson's organizations, and other partners. (3) to showcase these projects to the public.

While it is the responsibility of interested organizations to craft project proposals, they are encouraged to contact their local wildlife biologist to help develop suitable proposals. Attached you will find all DHIIPI program information, including the application. Complete grant materials, including eligibility rules and application, are also available online at [www.michigan.gov/dnr-grants](http://www.michigan.gov/dnr-grants) following the link to the *Deer Habitat Improvement Partnership Initiative*.

**Completed applications must be postmarked by or received electronically by close of Business Friday, March 6, 2026,** and addressed to: Bill Scullon, Field Operations Manager, Norway DNR Field Office, 520 West US Hwy 2, Norway MI 49870. Successful applicants will be notified by Friday, March 27, 2026. If you have any questions or need additional information, please call (906) 250-6781, fax (906) 563-5802 or email [scullonh@michigan.gov](mailto:scullonh@michigan.gov).

Sincerely,

Bill Scullon  
Field Operations Manager, Wildlife Division

BS  
Enclosures

# **2026 Upper Peninsula Deer Habitat Improvement Partnership Initiative Michigan Department of Natural Resources – Wildlife Division Executive Summary Handout**

The Deer Habitat Improvement Partnership Initiative (DHAPI) is a competitive grant program offered by Wildlife Division and focuses on cooperative projects enhancing deer habitat on private lands in the Upper Peninsula. Now in its' 18<sup>th</sup> year, over \$1,295,000 of deer hunting license dollars have been invested into Upper Peninsula deer habitat through the DHAPI program, with an additional \$950,000 of matching funds contributed through partners in over 162 projects: enhancing thousands of acres of deer habitat in nearly all Upper Peninsula counties.

**New for 2026 the total DHAPI program budget has increased to \$200,000. The maximum and minimum grant requests have also increased respectively to a maximum of \$25,000 and a minimum of \$5,000. Required match remains at 25%. Further, applicants can now bundle multiple project proposals under one application instead of applying separately for each proposal, provided they stay below the maximum grant value. Applicants seeking maximum grant values can also request a two-year grant window to implement more complex projects. Applicants seeking a two-year window will need to explain their rationale for consideration, approval of the two-year grant implementation window is not automatic.**

**The request for grant proposals opens on Monday, January 26, 2026, and closes Friday, March 6, 2026.**

There are three primary Initiative goals that all project proposals must include:

- (1) To produce tangible, on-the-ground deer habitat improvements,
- (2) To build and promote partnerships between the DNR and sportsperson organizations/other partners.
- (3) To showcase these cooperative projects throughout the community.

Applications can be submitted from conservation organizations, sportsperson groups, non-governmental organizations, local conservation districts, land conservancies, landowners enrolled in the Qualified Forest Program, or lands enrolled in the Commercial Forest Act. Landowners who have a certified Forest Management Plan and meet minimum acreage thresholds are also eligible to apply directly. Please refer to the DHAPI Program Guide for full details and eligibility rules.

Projects can be proposed to occur on industrial forests, Commercial Forest Act or Qualified Forest Program enrolled lands, privately owned, or federal lands (with written permission). Public accessibility is an important consideration and project lands which allow legal public access (foot traffic at a minimum) will benefit in the competitive evaluation process. **State-owned lands are not eligible for DHIPI funding.**

Examples of project proposals include, but are not limited to: wildlife shrub plantings, tree plantings (such as long-lived conifers, oak or other hard mast species, fruit/soft mast producers), scarification for regeneration of tree species, non-commercial timber stand improvement activities, direct mechanical habitat manipulation, wildlife opening creation or maintenance, warm or cool season herbaceous plantings and native prairie plantings.

Organizations considering participation in this Initiative are encouraged to contact their local wildlife biologist to develop suitable project proposals. It is the responsibility of the partner organization to undertake the primary role in the implementation of the project. The proposal should indicate specific plans on how the partner intends to accomplish the project, including the required project cost share match.

Proposed projects will be evaluated by a selection committee on the following five criteria: Production of deer habitat benefits; Feasibility of the proposal; Public accessibility and / or proximity to public lands; Partner cost share and project implementation; and a Communications strategy.

Successful applicants will need to register with the State of Michigan to facilitate grant funding. A partner organization or landowner must name a project contact person/representative and include appropriate contact information on the application. Additionally, the sponsor organization or landowner will be required to sign a contract agreement and liability release which specifies deliverables, timelines, and partner responsibilities.

Complete grant materials are available online at [DNR Wildlife Grants page](#) or type [www.michigan.gov/dnr-grants](http://www.michigan.gov/dnr-grants) then follow the *Deer Habitat Improvement Partnership Initiative* link. Contact Bill Scullon at: cell phone 906-250-6781, fax 906-563-5820, email [scullonh@michigan.gov](mailto:scullonh@michigan.gov) with further questions or to request an application packet.

**Completed applications must be emailed / mailed (post marked) to Bill Scullon, Field Operations Manager, Norway DNR Field Office, 520 West US Hwy 2, Norway MI 49870 by close of business on Friday, March 6, 2026.** Final notification of project selection process will occur by Friday, March 27, 2026.