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Michigan - The Wolverine State: I'd like to take a few minutes to talk about my state and then try and describe our state forest system and Department of Natural Resources.

Early Indians called it Mishigamow - meaning "Great Water," And of course the Great Lakes form a major portion of our borders with a 3,100 mile coastline. Several flags have flown over the state including those of France, Spain, Great Britain and of course the United States, Three great Indian tribes lived in Michigan prior to the coming of the Europeans - the Potawatomis in Southern Michigan, Ottawas further north and the Ojibwas (Chippewas) in the Upper Peninsula. Smaller tribes of Menominees, Hurons, Sauks, Miamis and Mascouters also had isolated villages throughout the area.

In 1837 Michigan became the 36th State, Since then it has become tops in many fields. Like, making car... mining iron and salt... growing cherries and beans... making chemicals and pharmaceutical supplies-, and entertaining vacation visitors. Forestry is big business in Michigan also.

The 3.8 million acres of state-owned forest land form the largest dedicated state forest system in the nation. Representing about 10% of the total land area of the state, this state forest acreage is dispersed about equally above and below the Straits of Mackinaw. Here lies unlimited opportunities for outdoor recreation, timber and wildlife production,

For the most part, the state forest land is tax reverted land; land which was once in private ownership, but which became state-owned through foreclosure after taxes were unpaid in the early years of this century, They were mostly cut-over, burned-over lands abandoned by timber companies after logging, or abandoned farms with soil so poor they could not support families.. Over 80 percent of the state forest lands were acquired this way, with the first forest being established near Higgins and Houghton Lakes in 1903. The remaining 20% of the forest acreage was acquired through later purchases mostly with hunting and fishing license monies.

The State Forest System is administered by the Department of Natural Resources, and is divided into seven management areas; six of which are designated State Forests. Of these six State Forests, three are located in the upper peninsula (Region II), The seventh management area, called Region III, comprises the south half of the lower peninsula. Region III operations are generally restricted to professional assistance to private land owners,

Each of the six State Forests is managed by a professional forester and is further subdivided into three or more units. Each unit in turn, has its own Forester-in-Charge,

"Multiple use" is the concept by which the State Forest System is managed, The forests are managed for as many purposes as can be fitted Into the same area at the same time without destroying the forest resource. Timber production, wild-life management and general public recreation are the major objectives behind

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multiple use management, It is the job of the Forest Supervisor to insure these objectives are balanced and well coordinated within his forest, The Forester-in-Charge of each unit is responsible for the work actually being done in the field, and will make timely recommendations to the Forest Supervisor concerning local management situations.

A well managed forest provides users with a wide range of recreational opportunities. Camping is one of the principal uses of the forest, There are approximately 200 campgrounds all located on lakes or streams, and equipped with tables, drinking water and toilets. Most are small, accomodating only 15 to 30 camping parties, A few are larger, providing space and facilities for as many as 75 camps, There are marked pathways at a few of the campgrounds. In addition, there are many small public access sites to lakes and streams. Forest roads provide enjoyable scenery and an opportunity to view wildlife and many types of conservation projects, Blueberries and other wild berries are generally abundant in the proper seasons, There are also marked forest drives, scenic sites and natural areas. Most State Forest Campgrounds are free; however, at the larger facilities, a \$2 daily fee is charged,

Camping is also permitted on any State Forest land not posted against camping.

To accommodate hikers and skiers, there are more than sixty pathways spread throughout the State Forest System. These pathways, which are closed to motorized traffic, represent several hundred miles of peaceful hiking and cross country skiing recreation.

The Michigan State Forest System boasts more than 3,000 miles of marked snowmobile trails. And, a fleet of specially designed trail groomers insure your snowmobiling is the smoothest in the Midwest. Funding for the snowmobile trails program is provided through a special snowmobile registration fee.

Trailbikes and off-road vehicles (ORV's) represent another growing recreational pursuit within the State Forest System. With standard motor vehicle licensing and registration, trailbikes and ORV's are permitted to use roads, forest trails and drives, passable by conventional two-wheel-drive vehicles, But, by purchasing an additional off-road vehicle registration sticker, any of the specially designated off-road vehicle areas can be used,

Finally, the State Forest System provides a host of other miscellaneous recreational opportunities. It makes no difference whether you are a berry picker, mushroom hunter, birdwatcher or a wildflower fancier, Michigan's State Forest System has something for you. From the old mining towns of Copper Country in the Keweenaw Peninsula, to the grown-over logging camps of the lower peninsula, Michigan's history and artifacts are spread across the state like seeds to the wind-bound to captivate the enthusiasm of amateur archaeologists and historians, alike.

These are just a few of the recreational activities available on the State Forest System. There's a lot to do and see here. The opportunities are endless,

Another important function of the State Forest System is to keep Michigan, the nation and the world supplied with wood; and what a job it does In 1977 alone, the State Forest System sent 470,000 cords of wood to the mill to be converted into lumber, pulp and a variety of other products. That's a lot of wood, In fact, if you were to pile that wood into one long stack, four feet tall and four feet wide, it would start at the very northern most tip of Michigan In the Keweenaw Peninsula, and wouldn't end until you reached our friends in Ohio, The direct value to the state for all that wood was more than \$2 million, And, the time it was hauled to the mill, converted to primary wood products, manufactured

into useable items, then sold back to the consumer, its value to Michigan's economy had increased to more than \$240 million, Forestry and the State Forest System is big business; helping the economy and providing employment for thousands of people.

But, that's only part of the total forest management picture, wildlife biologists agree that while state foresters were busy harvesting all that wood in 1977, they were also helping out wildlife. It is estimated that the cutting activity spread over 40,000 acres of state-owned land in 1977, increased the carrying capacity of the deer range by some 67,000 deer, and untold numbers of small game and nongame species. This is due primarily to the creation of small openings in the woods and the resulting stimulation of new forest growth.

Through an active Forest Cultivation program, foresters are methodically thinning out diseased, poor quality and unwanted trees from dense stands, to make available more growing room for the healthy, high quality individuals, keeping one eye on the future, foresters are planting trees on barren land bringing it back into useful production. At the same time, they are keeping the other eye open for any disease and pest activity that might prove injurious to the forest,

And one more thing, as the cost of home heating fuel keeps climbing year after year, more and more people are turning to wood as an alternative source of fuel, The State Forest System is the single largest source of free fuel wood for home use in the state, with more than 20,000 permits being issued each year.