

EDITOR EDITORIALS

INVASIVE SPECIES MICHIGAN'S BIGGEST NIGHTMARE



This is the one place in the Newsletter, website and other Internet connections, where I get a chance to just say what I want to say. It is my opinion and does not reflect the opinions of Hiking Michigan or it's members. This particular months Editorials are strong opinions, but the subject matter needs strong actions quickly to save what we still have here in Michigan.

We have an agency in our beautiful state of Michigan, that we pay for, to watch after our Natural Resources. This agency is supposed to not only take care of our healthy ecosystems and waterways, but it is there to watch after these things and keep them healthy and flourishing for now and future generations. The agency even has the name of just what it is suppose to be doing and looking after....the Department of Natural Resources.

But we have a critical problem in Michigan. INVADERS. Invasive Species who have infiltrated our lands and waters. Many do not have any enemies, so they flourish unchecked on our state lands and in our lakes and rivers. Most have been left completely unchecked and dealt with by anyone other than concerned Volunteer citizens and outdoor groups. Why are the only people that are battling the biggest problems we have to our Natural Resources in Michigan, Volunteers? Would you not believe that this severe problem of Invasive Species, be best handled by a state agency we foot the bills on and was created to fight matters such as these. Our DNR?

Yes.....the DNR is involved in Invasive Species control. They have ONE Steward DNR Ranger, who handles more than 12 Parks in S.E.MI. alone. ONE

Ranger! There are NO regular maintenance programs at any Park to regularly battle this war which is at such a critical stage. You cannot even find listed funding in the DNR budget that addresses Invasive Species. yet it is the biggest problem that faces our states healthy Ecosystems. Why is this?

Almost 2 years ago, the people of Michigan showed an overwhelming support for our Natural Resources, Parks and waterways, by supporting the new PASSPORT sticker program. In fact.....we the people showed such a strong support for this, we exceeded the needed revenues by over 34%. That's right.....not only did our DNR collect enough money from the PASSPORT system to maintain our Parks & Waterways according to their own budget needs, but they exceeded the funds needed by over 34%. So tell me.....why is the biggest problem facing a healthy ecosystem and quality Natural Resources in our state, not being addressed? It certainly is not from a lack of funds. So what is it? Incompetence Lack of Caring? Misguided focus?

Poor focus from DNR management like the A.D.D. attention to Linear Bike PATHWAYS through out the state, is at the root of this problem. Will the DNR finally see what their real jobs are when the state is one big Mono culture of Invasive Species and Amusement Parks?

These are my personal opinions and do not reflect anything other than that. Rob Golda

MY APOLOGIZES

I would like to share my deepest apologizes, for leading all of you down a Path that I was fooled about myself. I was convinced that the new PASSPORT Parks sticker program would be the solution to finally bringing in steady, needed funding for our Parks, Waterways and Natural Resources in Michigan. I was convinced while speaking with various DNR officials, that this would produce the funds needed to maintain our DNR and get our Natural Resources healthy once again. That if the PASSPORT system really worked well, that the funding would be enough to not only keep our Ecosystems healthy and strong for future generations, but it would be enough to finally rebuild our infrastructure that had been abandoned for more than 15 years by the lack of proper funding from our state Legislators.

It was all a lie. I was fooled completely. The PASSPORT system was a big success. In fact....the people of the state of Michigan stood strong and exceeded the needed funding, by more than 34%. yet almost nothing has been done by our DNR with the rebuilding of our Parks and Waterways infrastructures, or with Invasive species control and Trails repairs and maintenance. Instead.....much of the PASSPORT moneys have gone on hair brain Parks & Recreation notions of connecting every Park and small town in our state, together, with Linear Bike PATHWAYS. Now the DNR is telling us they need more money. Money to gain control of Detroit's Belle Isle, and to build an ADVENTURE Center in Detroit, and to resurface Tennis courts in seasonal towns. Towns that are a part of the Linear Bike PATHWAYS system. I apologizes for being such a Fool and letting these fake DNR officials, convince me that their goals where genuine and honest. I then told as many people as I could, through Hiking Michigan, that the PASSPORT sticker was a good thing. It is not. It only finances the insane agendas of a few power hungry DNR officials. Most of which should be removed. I am so very Sorry.