

Outdoorsmen have interest in ballot proposals

OUTDOOR INSIGHTS



BILL PARKER

"G" is good! "D" is dangerous. That's the simple way to differentiate between the two ballot proposals dealing with our hunting heritage and slated to be on the ballot when the polls open on Nov. 5.

Proposal G, The Wildlife Act, which was sponsored by republican senator Matt Dunaskis of Lake Orion, received broad-based bipartisan support in the Michigan Legislature, and was signed by Governor John Engler. It is supported by conservation groups statewide including Citizens for Professional Wildlife Management, Michigan United Conservation Clubs, Michigan Boating Industries Association

and many others. Proposal G would leave decisions regarding the preservation and well-being of Michigan game and wildlife up to the Natural Resource Commission. Under Proposal G the Commission would oversee all wildlife and game management decisions, with ample opportunity for public input in the decision-making process. Proposal G would leave these decisions up to professional wildlife managers who use sound scientific principles to manage wildlife.

Proposal G is an endorsement for the Michigan Department of Natural Resources' outstanding record in wildlife management over the past 76 years. That management strategy, which includes regulated hunting as a management tool, has produced outstanding results. For instance, there are more white-tail deer in Michigan right now than there were at the turn of the century; elk and turkey pop-

ulations, which were nearly non-existent in the early 1900's have now been restored and are thriving; the black bear population is in excellent shape with a growing population estimated at 10,000 animals. All of these species, with the aid of managed hunting, are now living in harmony with the carrying capacity of the available land.

Thanks to professional wildlife management, Michigan enjoys some of the best hunting opportunities in the nation, and still offers plenty of wild game for public viewing and photographic opportunities. No species has ever become extinct because of managed hunting.

Proposal D, the C.U.B. initiative, which is financed by a couple of wealthy Michigan land owners and out-of-state animal rights groups seeks to eliminate two scientifically-proven techniques for hunting bear in Michigan. Proposal D seeks to

ban the use of bear hounds and bait in harvesting a bear. The way 95-percent of Michigan's black bear are taken. If proposal D passes it will severely restrict the Michigan Department of Natural Resources' ability to manage the state's largest predator.

Last year, with the use of dogs and bait, 5,652 bear hunters killed 1,458 bears in Michigan. Contrary to what the non-hunting, animal-rights activists claim it is not easy to hunt a bear with bait or dogs. That fact is underlined by the 25.8-percent success rate. If these techniques were really "unsporting" and made it "easy" to kill a bear, as the animal-rightsists will try to make you believe, wouldn't the success rate be up somewhere at least above 50-percent?

Take away these two time-honored techniques and you have essentially killed bear hunting in Michigan. Driving

and glassing bear, the way they are hunted in other states, won't work here because of the vast swamps and tracks wilderness in bear country, which is primarily the Upper Peninsula. Take away these two techniques and you'll have an exploding population of unmanaged predators without a predator.

Michigan only has so much wilderness left in which bear can prosper. Through regulated hunting, wildlife managers are able to maintain a viable bear population which is in harmony with the carrying capacity of the available land. If the population exceeds that carrying capacity because hunters will no longer be able to harvest 1,400 bear annually, a number of events will likely occur:

- Nuisance complaints will rise because bear will be pushed into the fringe of populated urban areas.
- Camper and hikers will

undoubtedly be threatened by rummaging bears who will have lost their fear of man.

- Property and crops will be damaged from the growing, unmanaged bear population.
- Poaching will increase as property owners randomly kill nuisance bears to protect their investments.

- The status of the black bear will diminish from a prized game animal to a varmint.

- Eventually, nature will step in and manage the population through disease and starvation. Although passage of Proposal D would be a disaster for the black bear, another frightening aspect of the proposal is that it is supported and promoted by animal-rights activists who admit their ultimate goal is to end all hunting. Passage of Proposal D is the first step in achieving that goal in Michigan.

For info: (810) 644-1314 or call Bill Parker evenings at 901-2573.

OUTDOOR CALENDAR

TARGET SHOOTING

CLAY TARGET CHAMPIONSHIPS
The Bald Mountain Shooting Range in Lake Orion will be the site of the Michigan Clay Target Championships on Saturday and Sunday, Nov. 2-3. Shooters will compete in trap, skeet and sporting clays competition. Call (810) 814-9193 for additional information.

SEASONS/DATES

BEAR

Through Oct. 26 in the Upper Peninsula and through Sept. 26 in the Lower Peninsula. A special bow-season only will be held Oct. 4-10 in the Red Oaks Unit.

PHEASANT

Oct. 10-20 in Zone I and Oct. 20-Nov. 14 in zones II and III.

RABBIT

Through March 31.

RUFFED GROUSE

Statewide through Nov. 14, Dec. 1-Jan 1 in zones II and III.

SHARP-TAIL GROUSE

Oct. 1-Nov. 14 in Zone I only.

SQUIRREL

Statewide through Jan. 1.

TURKEY

Oct. 7-Nov. 3 by special permit only.

WOODCOCK

Statewide through Nov. 14.

FISHING CLUBS

FOUR SEASONS

The Four Seasons Fishing Club meets 7:30 p.m. the first Wednesday of each month at the Maplewood Center in Garden City. Call Sam Pilato at (313) 420-0521 for more information.

FISHING BUDDYS

Fishing Buddys Fishing Club meets monthly in Rochester Hills. Call (810) 656-0556 for more information.

MICHIGAN FLY FISHING

The Michigan Fly Fishing Club meets at 7 p.m. the first and third Wednesdays of each month at Livonia Clarenceville Junior High School. Call (810) 478-1494 for more information.

BASS ASSOCIATION

The Downriver Bass Association, a non-tournament bass club, meets the fourth Tuesday of every month at the Dearborn Civic Center. Call (313) 676-2863 for more information.

METROPARKS

METROPARK REQUIREMENTS

Most Metropark programs are free, while some require a nominal fee. Advanced registration and a motor vehicle permit are required for all programs. Call the respective parks, toll free: Stony Creek, 1-800-477-7766; Indian Springs, 1-800-477-3192; Kensington, 1-800-477-3178.

GARAGE SALE

The Huron-Clinton Metropark's annual sale of used vehicles, equipment and supplies begins at 9 a.m. Saturday, in the central garage at Kensington. Sale items will be available for inspection beginning at 8 a.m.

TWO HOUR TOUR

A naturalist-led hike around Wildwing Lake begins at 9:30 a.m. Saturday at Indian Springs. Participants should bring binoculars to this two-and-a-half-mile hike.

NATURE TALES

A program for tots accompanied by an adult which includes stories, songs, crafts and games, begins at 10 a.m. Saturday at Kensington.

TREES 'N' LEAVES

Learn to identify trees and leaves during this program, which begins at 10 a.m. Saturday at Indian Springs. Participants are urged to bring a notebook and a pencil.

MOONLIGHT HIKE

Learn about the changing seasons, search for owls, dead fungi, and try a coyote howl during this program, which begins at 8 p.m. Saturday at Indian Springs.

TREASURE HUNT

Stories about Michigan folklore, tall tales and legends followed by a hike on a nature trail to search for evidence of the legends, begins at 2 p.m. Sunday at Indian Springs.

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