

## **Educational Corner—Submitted by Mindy Koch Proposed Expansion of Camp Grayling**

The Michigan National Guard (Guard) proposes to more than double the size of their training area in the Grayling area. The proposal includes leasing approximately 162,000 acres of public State Forest lands. The lease would initially have a 20-year term, subject to annual reviews by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The proposed leased property is currently publicly managed State Forest providing hunting and fishing opportunities and public trails.

The Guard currently controls 148,000 acres. The proposed training on the additional property will include the use of sophisticated communication systems and training activities related to cyber warfare. The Guard has stated that all activities will be low impact, no live fire, no new roads, or other alterations to the landscape. A 1,500 foot buffer from bodies of water is proposed. The 162,000 acres will remain open to public use and the DNR will be allowed to continue timber management as determined by a lease between the Guard and the DNR. However, the Guard has stated that areas will be closed to the public during active training.

Many of the public comments regarding the expansion are asking for more specifics on how the military will use the additional land. The comments relate to a lack of detailed information from the Guard to support their statements regarding no landscape impacts, no environmental impacts and allowance of public use.

If the DNR approves the National Guard's proposal to significantly expand their footprint over public land, both the Guard and DNR will begin an internal review process and lease negotiation process. This is followed by more public input and an eventual decision at the end of 2023. The DNR is accepting comments now. Submit comments to the DNR's Camp Grayling lease update proposal webpage or by email to [DNR-Camp-Grayling@Michigan.gov](mailto:DNR-Camp-Grayling@Michigan.gov).

