**2021 Deer Habitat Improvement Partnership Initiative Grant Award Recipients and Projects Descriptions (*In random order)***

1. **Iron-Baraga Conservation District**

The Iron-Baraga Conservation District (IBCD) has been awarded $**13,500.00** a project to partner with multiple landowners in Iron and Baraga Counties (Specific participating landowners / parcels to be determined through a selection process and identified at later date).

The intent of this project with the Iron Baraga Conservation District (IBCD) is to enhance deer wintering habitat across KBIC tribal and private lands in Iron and Baraga Counties. The grant will provide seedlings and trees to landowners at a significantly reduced cost. This grant proposal would allow landowners to immediately implement habitat improvements. IBCD plans to have 5 planting project types in which landowners can buy shares or allotments of seedlings. This proposal will utilize the planting of fruit trees, wildlife bushes and oaks as sources of hard and soft mast. Additionally, a wide variety of conifer species will be utilized to create cover habitat.

Eligible landowners need to have 20 acres minimum and are preferred to be located within a DWC. landowners can mix and purchase more than one share. The first planting type is with the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community on tribal lands planting a wide variety of hardwoods, mast species, and conifers on 31 acres in previously harvest stand for spruce budworm die back. The second type will be in partnership with Iron and Baraga School Districts. Students will assist in plantings utilizing conifers, fruit bearing trees, and wildlife shrubs on school forest lands. The remaining planting types are available to the eligible private landowners. The third type will involve a small-scale hard mast planting option with up to 10 shares available for private landowners to purchase. Each share they will receive 50 oak saplings and tree protectors. The Fourth planting type will provide 50 wildlife shrubs seedlings as browse habitat. Up to ten shares will be available to landowners. The fifth type is a wildlife fruit tree planting with up to 20 landowners shares available for purchase, each share will receive 10 apple trees with protectors. IBCD proposes a match of $12,606.00 (48%) for a total project valued at $26,106.00.

1. **Straits Area Sportsmen’s Club**

The Straits Area Sportsmen’s Club (SASC) has been approved for $**15,000.00** for a project to partner with the USFS St. Ignace Ranger District to brush wildlife openings in Mackinac County (T42N R4W, Sections 14; T43N R3W, Section 29 & 30; T43N R4W, Section 26 & 27; all lands are owned by the US Forest Service, St. Ignace Ranger District).

The intent of this project is to improve the suitability of deer wintering complexes in Mackinac County by mechanical (masticator) or hand brushing wildlife openings to set back woody encroachment and improve cool season grasses as high quality food sources for deer. on the St. Ignace Ranger District. This project will also improve habitat conditions for species such as ruffed grouse and pollinators by restoring natural forest opening conditions. This project is intended Approximately 30 acres of small opening habitats on FS lands will be brushed removing encroaching woody vegetation. Opening average 1 to 4 acres.  If funds are available after the preliminary treatment, SASC will purchase red oak saplings (approximately 2-4 foot in height) and wildlife shrubs Thorn-apple to be planted around some opening perimeters.

Partners include USFS contributing $10,000 in Biologist and Technician time and $50,000 in funds for project implementation. The Ruffed Grouse Society will contribute $5,000 from the Drummer Fund for early successional habitat creation of 10 acres. SASC will contribute approximately 200 hours of labor as in-kind match valued at $4,828. Total planned match is $79.828.00 (84%). The total project is valued at $94,828.

1. **Marquette County Conservation District**

The Marquette County Conservation District (MCCD) has been approved for a **$14,900** grant to partner with Lyme Timber Company on lands they own in Marquette County (T49N, R27W, Section 14 and 23) to improve 7 acres of deer habitat adjacent to a Deer Wintering Complexes (DWC) by preparing hunter walking trails with a bulldozer and other mechanical means. Approximately 3.5 miles of recent logging roads and skid trails, with small pushouts in appropriate areas will be treated.  A rotary spreader will be used on a volunteer’s tractor to spread wildlife seed, including Ladino Clover, Red Clover, Timothy, Alfalfa and Orchard grass, onto the trails and pushouts. Michigan United Conservation Cubs (MUCC) and Ruffed Grouse Society (RGS) volunteers will then plant approximately 200 mast soft and hard mast producing shrubs onto the edges of these trails and in appropriate openings nearby. Finally, the excavating contractor will revisit the sites to move and place boulders at 5 possible access sites to block off vehicular traffic to ensure survivability of the seed and eliminate any possibility of rutting or damage by unauthorized vehicle access. These parcels are enrolled into Michigan’s Commercial Forest Act and are therefore open to public foot access for hunting and trapping purposes. These areas are also near identified DWCs, are used for migration routes, and spring breakup foraging areas for deer. The naturalized seed, and the mast plantings will provide critical food and breakout wildlife openings as a sustainable food source.  Signs detailing the project and funding sources will be installed at the parcel.   MCCD a proposes a match of $4,495.83 (34%) and the total project budget is $20,402.76.

1. **U.P. Whitetails-Shawn Cannon Forestry**

U.P. Whitetails Association Inc. (UPWTA) and Shawn Cannon Forestry has been approved for a **$7,520.00** grant for a spring break out wildlife openings enhancement project in Marquette County (Turin township, T44N, R24W, Sections: 16, 20, and 29. Lands are privately owned). There is little active agriculture and few managed openings in this area. The need for high quality browse is essential for wildlife within this area especially for deer traveling to and from yarding locations. The goal of this project is to enhance summer and spring break conditions for wildlife. The project will include 7 different sites totally 17 acres. The total landowner acreage between the two different individuals is 320 acres.

The sites will be seeded with a wildlife mixture consisting of oats, white ladino clover, red clover, alfalfa and chicory. The planting mix is a hardy seed type and provides an excellent source of protein. Chicory is a unique to inter-plant along with clovers as it has a long tap root system and holds strong during very hot dry conditions during summer months. Oats main objective is to help nurse other planted seeds during their first growing season. While the planting sites are private land holdings, but they are surrounded by state lands within a 40-acre distance. They propose a match of $2,840 (27%) for a total project valued at $10,360.00.

1. **Menominee County Pheasant Club**

Menominee County Pheasant Club (MCPC) has been approved for **$2,850.00** for their “Deer habitat enhancement on MCPC publicly accessible land” in Menominee County (T35N, R26W, sec 18, NWSW, 74 acres owned by the Menominee County Pheasant Club).

The intent of this project with the MCPC is to enhance wildlife habitat conditions on the publicly accessibly parcel to provide more diverse hunting opportunities including deer and upland game birds. MCPC has opened their land to the general public for hunting without any membership requirements. The goal of this parcel is to attract wildlife such as deer, pheasants, turkeys and other wildlife through habitat improvement. MCPC has previously partnered with USDA NRCS Conservationist and DNR Wildlife to develop a property habitat plan by focusing on increasing the availability of quality food sources, shelter, and the improvement of habitat. They plan to plant a clover pathway (hunter walking trail) approximately 3,500 feet long, and another 2.3 acres of forb plantings. All sites will have the soil bed prepared, chemical treatment as necessary, soil tested, and planted accordingly. They also plan to plant 200 wildlife shrubs in six to eight groupings with fencing for establishment. USDA NRCS and Menominee Conservation District are project cooperators. Project signage will be placed. They propose a match of $1,147.98 (29%) and total project valued at $4,001.98

1. **Gogebic Conservation District-Devils Creek Deer Winter Complex**

The Gogebic Conservation District (GCD) has been awarded **$2,525.00** for the Devils Creek-Chaney Lake Deer Wintering Complex Spring Forage Enhancement project in Gogebic County (locations: site 1: T45N R46W S: 2, 3, site 2: T46N R46W S: 13, 24, 25, 29, 30, site 3: T46N R45W S: 8, 19, 30, all sites are owned by Gogebic County).

The intent of this project with the GCD is to provide high-quality deer forage adjacent to the Devils creek-Chaney Lake Deer Wintering Complex and Mosinee Grouse Enhanced Management Site (GEMS) area of Gogebic County Forest lands in Gogebic County in an area where wildlife openings are scarce and may not offer suitable foraging opportunities for wintering deer. Old logging roads were converted into spring forage areas with a mix of cool season legumes in past years. The proposal includes mowing of previously DHIPI grant established trails and plots. Plans are for treatment of 12.32 acres. Thin spots along the trails will be reseeded after mowing is completed. GCD plans to partner with the Gogebic County Forestry and Parks Commission. The project match is $854 (25.3%) through in-kind labor with a total project value of $3,820.00.

1. **Gogebic Conservation District-Little Girls Point Deer Winter Complex**

The Gogebic Conservation District (GCD) has been awarded **$5,520.00** for the Little Girl’s Point Deer Wintering Complex Spring Forage Enhancement project in Gogebic County (locations: site 1: T48N R47W S30, site 2: T48N R49W S: 13, 24, site 3: T49N R48W S25, site 4: T48N R48W S: 2, 6, 10, 11, 16, 19, 23, 24, all sites are owned by Gogebic County).

The intent of this project with the GCD is to provide high-quality deer forage adjacent to the Little Girl’s Point Deer Wintering Complex in Gogebic County in an area where wildlife openings are scarce and may not offer suitable foraging opportunities for wintering deer. The proposed project will convert abandoned logging roads into food breakout areas in several places, in addition to mowing previously planted logging roads from 2019 seeding efforts to reduce competition from competing grasses and vegetation.

They plan to plant old abandoned forest trails and openings within the Little Girls Point DWC as spring break out areas and hunter walking trails with a mix of cool season legumes to provide protein rich forage for deer. Likewise, they will promote the longevity of similarly planted roads by mowing the established plants and discourage encroaching woody vegetation. Each enhanced road is spaced throughout several survey townships. A total of 10.9 acres of logging roads and old openings will be treated. Approved signs will be erected along public pathways to highlight the intention of the deer habitat improvement. GCD plans to partner with the Gogebic County Forestry and Parks Commission. The district will provide a match of $1,843 (25%) and the total project is valued at $7,336.00.

1. **Alger Conservation District**

The Alger Conservation District (ACD) has been awarded **$11, 290.00** to convert old logging roads into valuable deer forage areas in Alger County (Site 1, T44N, R22W, sec 11 owned by Lyme Great Lakes Timberland LLC.; Site 2, T44N, R21W, sec 14; T46N, R21W, sec 29, owned by Mark Ehlert trust).

The intent of this project with the Alger Conservation District (ACD) is to increase the availability of quality food sources, shelter, and the improvement of habitat within these two private land locations. ACD plans to partner with Lyme Great Lakes Timberland LLC., the Mark Ehlert trust, and Alger County Chapter of UP Whitetails. This project will, first, establish approximately 5 acres of wildlife openings to be planted on a 2-mile logging road to an average width of 20 feet, with larger pushouts at landings and junctions. Soil tests will be used to determine any need for amendments. The road will then be graded. A seed mix incorporating primarily red and white clover species will be broadcast or drill seeded as appropriate to the soil and bedrock regime at the site at a rate of approximately 15 lbs. per acre. This will produce an early-spring breakout food source. Second, soft and hard mast tree species and supplemental conifer cover will be planted flanking and adjacent to the logging road, clustering conifer cover and mast producers in irregularly-shaped pockets in an island-and-opening pattern in order to provide additional food and cover along the travel corridor. It is estimated that these pockets will add another acre to the total project area for a total of 6 acres enhanced. Third, two vehicle access points at junctions of the road will be closed by boulders or gates, as appropriate, to protect the new plantings. Two signs will be placed at these junctions to promote the project and its partners. The site in question is CFR land owned by Lyme Great Lakes Timberland LLC and is in CFR. The project site is part of over 2500 contiguous acres of CFR and state land. It is primarily northern hardwood. Near the eastern edge of the site is Hayes Creek, which functions as a wildlife corridor. A loop logging road near a past harvest site has been selected for this restoration. Partners on this proposal are Alger Conservation District; Lyme Great Lakes Timberland LLC; Alger County chapter of UP Whitetails; and Northern Michigan University’s intern program coordinated with Alger CD. The match from the district totals $5,706 (33.5%). The total project value is $16996.25.

1. **Schoolcraft Conservation District**

Schoolcraft Conservation District (SCD) has been awarded **$7,850.00** for a project in Schoolcraft and Mackinac Counties. The intent of this project with the SCD is to enhance wildlife openings on CFA (owned by Lyme Great Lakes Timberlands) and a private parcel in Mackinac county. Some of the selected sites have been past recipients of DHIPI funding and need maintenance operations. Others are new additions. This is a 3-part project to improve deer habitat in or near Schoolcraft County: First SCD will maintain the sixteen sites previously installed between 2017 to 2019 on Lyme Great Lakes Timberlands properties. This maintenance work will consist of replacing dead or missing supplanted mast trees and shrubs; placement and/or maintenance/repair of fencing around each of those planted trees and shrubs; mowing of the sites in mid- to late-July; watering the supplanted trees and shrubs at those sites if dry conditions indicate such; applying herbicide as needed to control competing vegetation around those trees and shrubs; taking soil samples and obtaining soil testing of those samples for sites and making fertilizer applications to the sites as indicated by those soil tests. Secondly, SCD will contract with a vendor to do all activities necessary to prepare, till, fertilize, and seed a new plot in western Mackinac county. The property is located very near to the Gulliver-Epoufette DWC. The third part of this proposal is to create maps of and directions to all of our to-date DHIPI plot locations, and place them on the SCD web site so that the public can readily locate these sites are for their possible interest in visiting the sites – whether that be for hunting, or general interest. The SCD match is $2527 (25%) and the total project is valued at $10 108.00.

1. **Whitetails Unlimited of Ontonagon County**

Whitetails Unlimited of Ontonagon County (OCWTU) has been awarded **$$8,615.00** for a Spring Breakout Area project in Ontonagon County (Haight Twp, T48N, R39W, sec 4, NENW, 46).

The intent of this project with OCWTU is to revitalize a historic agricultural field to provide nutritious spring forage for deer emerging from restrictive winter conditions. The site will be reworked and planted to a legume-based mix to provide high protein forage for migratory and resident deer. Approximately 10 acres will be prepared by a local farmer under contract to plow, till, and plant a clover and oats cover crop. Soils testing done in fall 2020 indicate that 200lbs of 12-24-24 fertilizer is needed per acre as well. The group plans to produce a large site sign. Cost share includes financial support and mowing of sites in August. OCWTU plans a match of $3,000 (29%). The total project value is $11,615.

1. **Ruffed Grouse Society/Lyme Timber Company, Gold Mine GEMS Hunter Walking Trails Improvement.**

The Ruffed Grouse Society (RGS) has been awarded a grant of **$7,800.00** for a GEMS and Hunter walking habitat enhancement project in Iron County (T44N, R35W, section 7, 88.73°W 46.21°N, Goldmine GEMS - 540 acres owned by Lyme Great Lakes Timberlands, T44N, R34W, section 24, Bates Amasa - 156 acres owned by Lyme Great Lakes Timberlands).

This project will include the maintenance and restoration of existing logging roads and hunter walking trails in Iron County on land owned and managed by Lyme Great Lakes Timberlands (formerly owned by Weyerhaeuser). There are two management units within this project: The first is the Gold Mine Grouse Enhance Management Site (GEMS) which includes 890 acres of huntable land and 2.5 miles of restored skid trails which now function as hunter walking trails. Proposed work at the Gold Mine GEMS will include the restoration of 2.5 miles of hunter walking trails within 540 acres. The second management unit is the Bates-Amasa complex in Iron County where 1 mile of hunter walking trail will be re-established among 156 acres. There are two 1-acre openings. The 2 wildlife openings will also be restored. Each of the proposed trails and openings have not been maintained for several years. Both trail restoration projects will include utilizing a brush hog or skid loader with a forest mulching head used to manipulate suckering aspen and other encroaching woody vegetation that is taking root along the trail. Each trail and wildlife openings will then undergo site prep, fertilization and reseeding of trails to rye. The wildlife opening restoration will require site preparation, herbicide will be applied followed by site prep/tilling, then fertilization and cultivation to rye in summer 2021. In August/September 2021 the trails and wildlife openings will then be seeded again to a buckwheat and red clover mix. A secondary seeding in one year will not only jump-start nutrient loading and hasten the restoration of these areas while creating a great opportunity to seed to clover in 2021. These actions are intended to provide a high-quality food source for wildlife. This work will be completed by a local contractor, contracts will be overseen by RGS as fiduciary and Lyme staff will also assist in project oversight and management. 4 miles of hunter walking trails treated will eques to 4.85 acres and approximately 2 acres of additional openings treated for project total of 7 acres to be enhanced. RGS proposes a match of $4,780 (61%) and a total project valued at $12,580.60.

1. **Wildlife Unlimited of Iron County**

Wildlife Unlimited of Iron County (WUIC) has been approved **$2,900.00** for a project perform maintenance actions on wildlife openings used in WUIC’s mentored youth hunting program in Iron County (T42N, R35W, section 35, 4 acres; T42N, R35W, section 11, 3 acres; T41N, R33W, section 34, 10 acres; T42N, R34W, section 20, 10 acres; T43N, R36W, section 2, 5 acres) totaling 32 acres.

The intent of this project with the WUIC is to perform maintenance operations on a series of private and wildlife openings originally established thru previous DHIPI grants. These openings are used a focal location’s for WUIC’s youth and veterans mentored hunting program. The openings need a variety of maintenance operations ranging from reworking, tilling, and replanting older wildlife plantings to clover and grass mixes, and addressing additional previous habitat enhancements through replacing dead and damaged planted soft mast fruit trees and protective fencings. WUIC is proposing a match of $5,800 (66%) and a total project valued at $8,700.00.