

MICHIGAN DNR CONSERVATION OFFICERS



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M.C.O.A. MISSION STATEMENT

The Michigan Conservation Officer Association (MCOA) is dedicated to establishing, promoting and maintaining the professional image of conservation law enforcement in Michigan, ensuring that current and future generations will understand and appreciate the essential role of natural resources protection in our most unique and diverse state.

PREFACE

Recently, a meeting was held between a Michigan legislator and a Michigan DNR Conservation Officer. The legislator believed that the Conservation Officer worked for the County Soil Conservation District and was unaware the Conservation Officer had any enforcement authority.

What do you know about Michigan DNR Conservation Officers?

The MCOA is committed to promoting the occupation of a Michigan DNR Conservation Officer. Conservation Officers find it frustrating when they have contact with individuals such as citizens, attorneys, and apparently even some legislators, who are unaware of who they are and what they do.

This document is intended to educate the reader about the Law Enforcement occupation of a Michigan Department of Natural Resources-Conservation Officer. The information contained herein will address the identity, authority, responsibilities, occupational hazards, recruitment struggles, retirement dilemma and various other issues concerning Conservation Officers. The information will provide factual statistics and factual work related examples dealing with Conservation Officers. This document will include the results of a demographic law enforcement survey within Michigan and a 2007/2008 national survey of American Game Wardens.

There is a significant and troublesome decline in recruitment for Conservation Officers, as well as morale and retention concerns within the Law Enforcement Division. Several issues will be addressed illustrating that Conservation Officers are not on a level playing field with similar law enforcement agencies; in fact they fall below the acceptable norm. The MCOA believes issues addressed within this document are the primary factors pertaining to the recruitment and retention problem and morale concerns. The DNR-Law Enforcement Division simply can no longer compete with similar law enforcement agencies for the highly qualified candidates.

Upon conclusion of this document, the reader shall be well versed regarding the occupation of a Michigan DNR Conservation Officer. This document has been made available to government officials, legislators, support groups, prospective applicants, media and any other interested parties. It is available for download in the form of a PDF file on the MCOA website at; **WWW.MCOAONLINE.NET**

HONOR OUR FALLEN CO'S



F.S. Wilson ~ 1854-1908

Arvid Erickson ~ 1896-1926

Emil Skoglund ~ 1896-1926

Andrew Schmeltz ~ 1890-1936

Maurice Luck ~ 1908-1938

Carlisle B. Smith ~ 1895-1943

Thomas C. Mellon ~ 1901-1947

Edward C. Starback ~ 1900-1957

Gerald Welling ~ 1918-1972

Vernon Scott Averill ~ 1946-1986



Michigan Conservation Officer

Frank S. Wilson

1854-1908

In about the month of September 1907, Frank S. Wilson received notice from the State of Michigan that he had been appointed a state game and fire warden. Deputy Warden Wilson's district comprised of ten counties in northern Michigan and he resided with his family in Elk Rapids.

Most records regarding the death of Deputy Warden Wilson were lost in the fire of the Cass Building of Elk Rapids in the 1950's.

Deputy Warden Wilson was last seen alive during the night of Wednesday April 1st 1908 in Traverse City. His body was found on Friday April 3rd 1908 in the woods of Leelanau, just over the line near Traverse City with two bullet wounds to his head.

Deputy Wilson was laid to rest at the age of 55 in the Maple Grove Cemetery in Elk Rapids Township, Antrim County, Michigan. He was survived by his wife and seven children.



Michigan Conservation Officer

Arvid Erickson

1896-1926

Arvid Erickson was born in Finland on May 8, 1896 and was brought to the United States by his parents when he was six years old. Erickson was a World War I veteran who was wounded twice while fighting over seas.

Marquette County Game Warden Arvid Erickson and Conservation Officer Emil Skoglund were working together on September 29, 1926, in the Sands Plains area of Marquette County. They were located near Sands Road, approximately 7 miles north of Gwinn when they encountered an unlicensed deer hunter.

During the course of the arrest, the suspect pulled a hidden .22 caliber revolver from his pocket and killed Warden Erickson with one shot to the back of his head. When Officer Skoglund came running to investigate the shot, he was shot twice in the chin. When the officers failed to return home and their abandoned car was found, a massive investigation and search for them was launched. The evidence eventually led to the killer, who confessed to the crime. The officers' bodies were recovered from Lake Superior. Their bodies were weighted down by bricks and dumped into Lake Superior from a dock located at the Lower Harbor (next to Spears Passenger Dock near the foot of Baraga Ave.) in Marquette. The killer was convicted of first degree murder and sentenced to life in prison. Warden Arvid Erickson was laid to rest at the age of 30, he was survived by his wife and two children.

Game Warden Arvid Erickson is recognized as a fallen officer by the National Law Enforcement Memorial, the Jurisdictional Plaque at the North American Game Warden Museum and on a plaque outside the District 3 office in Marquette, Michigan.



Michigan Conservation Officer

Emil Waldemar Skoglund

1890-1926

Emil Skoglund was born in Sweden on January 26, 1890. Skoglund was a State of Michigan Trapper and a Conservation Officer.

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Conservation Officer Emil Skoglund is recognized as a fallen officer by the National Law Enforcement Memorial, the Jurisdictional Plaque at the North American Game Warden Museum and on a plaque outside the District 3 office in Marquette, Michigan.



Michigan Conservation Officer

Andrew Schmeltz

1890 to 1936

Andrew Schmeltz was born in Ishpeming, Michigan on November 10, 1890.

Conservation Officer Andrew Schmeltz was checking an illegal trap line on October 20, 1936, when he was shot to death with a .22 caliber rifle by the man he was attempting to apprehend. In an effort to dispose of the body, the killer bought a case of dynamite and returned to the scene of the crime, where he set off a charge of explosives under the slain officer's body. This was ineffective, so he gathered the pieces of CO Schmeltz's body and dynamited them again. He then set off his remaining stick of dynamite in a decoy blast.

Unknown to the murderer, Conservation Officer Andrew Schmeltz had been accompanied that day by a friend who was unable to walk, but who heard all three blasts. He was able to give investigating officers information which led to the body and eventually to the suspect, who was convicted of first degree murder and sentenced to life imprisonment.

Conservation Officer Andrew Schmeltz death certificate indicates that he passed away on October 21, 1936. Conservation Officer Andrew Schmeltz was laid to rest in Ishpeming, Michigan on October 24, 1936. He was survived by his wife Lyda.

Conservation Officer Andrew Schmeltz is recognized as a fallen officer by the National Law Enforcement Memorial and on the Jurisdictional Plaque at the North American Game Warden Museum



Michigan Conservation Officer

Maurice C. Luck

1908-1938

Conservation Officer Maurice Luck was born on August 17, 1908 in Essex Township, Clinton County, Michigan.

Conservation Officer Maurice Luck was accidentally shot in the abdomen in Sandusky, Michigan on March 15, 1938. His service revolver fell out of his shoulder holster and discharged when he leaned over while working on his patrol car at a service station. Conservation Officer Maurice Luck died on March 16, 1938 at 4:45 a.m. at a local hospital.

Conservation Officer Maurice Luck was laid to rest on March 19, 1938 in St Johns, Michigan. Conservation Officer Maurice Luck was 29 at the time of his death and was survived by his mother and father, Earl and Mattie Luck, a sister, Miss Lois Luck and fiancé Vera Frederick.



Michigan Conservation Officer

Carlyle B. Smith

1895-1943

Conservation Officer Carlyle B. Smith set out to patrol the Maple River checking for set lines in Gratiot County on April 17th 1943. He began his patrol of the Maple River from Bridgeville (State Road) and proceeded down river towards Maple Rapids with his small patrol boat and motor. Smith was last seen alive while launching his patrol boat in Bridgeville.

It is believed that Smith's patrol boat known for its unstableness capsized into the cold water of the Maple River. Smith was able to retrieve his boat, motor and some equipment and drag them to shore. At this point Smith began an approximate 3 mile walk back to Bridgeville where his vehicle was parked.

When Smith did not return home from his patrol a massive search was initiated. State Conservation Officers, the State Police, the Gratiot and Clinton County Sheriff Departments and local citizens all assisted in the search for Smith. Smith's body was found on May 11th 1943 south of the Maple River between where he began his patrol and where his boat, motor and patrol equipment was found.

According to Michigan State Police reports, two MSP doctors conducted the autopsy and could not rule out heart disease. The Coroner's Jury concluded that Smith died due to "OVER EXERTION AND EXPOSURE."

Smith was laid to rest at the age of 48 at the Gunnison Cemetery in Clinton County, Michigan. Smith was survived by his wife Helen and daughter Marilyn.

A quote from a service record stated that Smith "has shown outstanding ability and has given exceptional service as an officer."

Conservation Officer Carlyle B. Smith is not currently recognized on the National Law Enforcement Memorial or on the Jurisdictional Plaque at the North American Game Warden Museum as a fallen officer. Smith is recognized as a fallen officer on a paving stone at the North American Game Warden Museum.



Michigan Conservation Officer

Thomas J. Mellon

1901-1947

Conservation Officer Thomas J. Mellon was born on April 5th 1901.

On October 23 1947, Conservation Officer Mellon was involved in fighting fires in Schoolcraft County. While ferrying fire equipment across the Manistique River, the heavily loaded boat hit a snag and capsized. Conservation Officer Mellon was pinned under a logjam where he drowned.

Conservation Officer Mellon was laid to rest at the age of 46.



Michigan Conservation Officer

Edward Carl Starback

1900-1957

Conservation Officer Edward C. Starback was born in Chicago on August 24, 1900.

On August 8, 1957 C.O. Starback was enroute from Boyne City to Beaver Island by plane to pick up a Department of Conservation patrol boat. C.O. Starback left this patrol boat at Beaver Island a few days prior due to rough weather conditions. Piloting the plane was a local insurance man by the name of Donald P Watkins, 63. They were also accompanied by C.O. Starback's two sons, Major Richard Starback, 35 and Carlton Starback, 28.

At approximately 1:20 p.m. on August 8, 1957 the four men departed for Beaver Island from the Boyne City Airport. At approximately 1:40 p.m. a pilot returning from Beaver Island witnessed the Watkins' Stinson Voyageur airplane in a tight spiral at an altitude of more than 2,000 feet. All four men perished in the plane crash.

Conservation Officer Starback was laid to rest at the age of 56 in the Breedsville Cemetery in Breedsville, Michigan. C.O. Starback was survived his wife Bonnie.

Conservation Officer Edward Starback is currently recognized on the National Law Enforcement Memorial and on the Jurisdictional Plaque at the North American Game Warden Museum as a fallen officer.



Michigan Conservation Officer

Gerald Welling

1918 - 1972

Conservation Officer Gerald Welling, 54, was killed at approximately 2:00 AM on September 10, 1972 while on patrol for illegal bear hunting activity at a dump site near the community of Hermansville.

Officer Welling, accompanied by Conservation Officer William Maycunich observed a pick-up enter the dump area and shine a light in an apparent attempt to locate bear. The officers, who were on foot at the time, attempted to apprehend the two occupants of the pick-up.

Officer Maycunich approached the stopped vehicle from the driver's side and Officer Welling was approaching the vehicle from the front, in full uniform, waving a flashlight, and illuminated by the headlights of the vehicle. As Officer Maycunich shined his flashlight into the pick-up, it suddenly sped forward, striking Welling. The pick-up had a hydraulic snow plow assembly mounted on its front and officer Welling became entangled in this assembly and was dragged underneath the vehicle for approximately 100 feet.

Officer Maycunich fired at the departing vehicle and apprehended the driver of the vehicle, Kenneth Viau, 24, of Bark River, a short distance down the road. A passenger in the vehicle, Gary E. Johnson, 30, of Hermansville, fled the scene on foot. Officer Welling was pronounced dead on arrival at the nearest hospital. Both Viau and Johnson were initially charged with first degree murder in this tragic event. Charges against Johnson were ultimately dismissed.

A jury trial resulted in Kenneth Viau being found guilty of a reduced charge of negligent homicide and being sentenced to one year in Marquette Prison.



Michigan Conservation Officer

Vernon Scott Averill

1946-1986

Conservation Officer V. Scott Averill was born in Sparta, Michigan on November 24 1946.

On Thursday October 23 1980 Conservation Officer Averill approached two men (father and son) spearing trout on the Acme Creek of Grand Travers County. Conservation Officer Averill wrote the two for illegally spearing fish. On request of the men, CO Averill turned his back to change the appearance date on the citations to a more convenient time for them. Without warning, the older man drew his .22 caliber hunting revolver and began pistol whipping CO Averill in the head while his son held him down.

The two men took CO Averill's service revolver, glasses and ticket book and fled the scene. With sever head injuries and damage to his brain, CO Averill was able to crawl to his vehicle and drive M-72 where he called for help. CO Averill was able to relay information on the two suspects to the Grand Traverse County Sheriffs Department. The two men were later arrested.

The night of this incident, CO Averill underwent surgery to relieve pressure on two skull depressions. CO Averill later developed brain tumors in the injured area and passed away on February 1, 1986 at the age of 39.

Conservation Officer Averill was laid to rest on February 5th 1986 at the Saint Mary's Cemetery in Lowell, Michigan. Conservation Officer Averill was survived by his Wife (Susan M.) and two children (Randy S. and Kristin R.).

Conservation Officer Averill is not currently recognized on the National Law Enforcement Memorial or on the Jurisdictional Plaque at the North American Game Warden Museum as a fallen officer. Averill is recognized as a fallen officer on a paving stone at the North American Game Warden Museum.

WHO ARE MICHIGAN DNR CONSERVATION OFFICERS?

Their unfamiliar uniforms draw questions from people such as; What prison do you work at? Or, what park are you from? They are called many names, the majority of which are derogatory in nature while rarely receiving the recognition that they deserve. In essence, they are the front line defenders of Michigan's priceless natural resources and much, much more.

Michigan Conservation Officers (more commonly referred to as CO's or Game Wardens) are employed by the State of Michigan, Department of Natural Resources (MDNR). The MDNR has many separate divisions of operations. Some of the divisions are Wildlife Division, Fisheries Division, Parks and Recreation Division, Forest Management Division and Law Enforcement Division, just to name a few. CO's work directly for the MDNR-Law Enforcement Division (or LED). LED is a law enforcement entity gripped within a non-law enforcement department (the DNR). LED operates in a para-military type structure and prides itself on maintaining the highest levels of professionalism, employing only the best candidates available.

Michigan was the first state to create salaried Conservation Officers which have served with honor and integrity since 1887, more than 120 years encompassing long standing traditions and community presence.



CO's are fully commissioned Police Officers, empowered to enforce all laws of the state of Michigan, and with good reason. CO's are responsible for enforcing felonies, misdemeanors and civil violations of Michigan law. CO's focus on recreational enforcement efforts revolving around hunting and fishing regulations, marine safety, snowmobile and ORV regulations, as well as environmental laws. They support and assist state and local law enforcement in a variety of domestic, traffic and public safety situations, and aid Federal authorities dealing with homeland security and border protection issues. CO's frequently work with the US Coast Guard on Michigan's Great Lakes.



Pictured is the CO patrol boat, "WILLIAM ALDEN SMITH" working with the US Coast Guard helicopter on the rough, unpredictable waters of Thunder Bay in Lake Huron.

CO's frequently encounter and take enforcement action upon fish and game violations, weapons and narcotics violations, domestic violence situations, probation and parole violations, assaults, drunk driving situations and various other violations of state law.

CO's are also called upon to assist in times of national disasters. On September 11th, 2001, CO's responded to provide on-water law enforcement for the Mackinaw Bridge. On September 4, 2005, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, (FEMA), requested assistance with the resulting disaster from hurricane Katrina. An untold number of Michigan Conservation Officers volunteered for the deployment and 54 of the volunteers, along with patrol boats, were sent to the Gulf region to assist with relief efforts. CO's primary responsibility was to perform law enforcement and search & rescue operations in some of the hardest hit areas.



CO's are certainly a unique class of Police Officer. Natural resource law enforcement is a physically and psychologically demanding occupation, which is dangerous as you will discover from further readings.

The DNR has other divisions with select employees that have limited enforcement authority. Forest Management Division has forest fire officers authorized to issue tickets for fire and campground related violations. Parks and Recreation Division has state park officers authorized to take enforcement action within state parks. While the badge of these two types of officers are very similar to a CO's badge, they wear different uniforms and they are not certified peace officers. These officers are commonly referred to as "DNR OFFICERS". It should be understood that they do not work for DNR-LED and they are not Conservation Officers.

Michigan Governor, Jennifer Granholm, in a recent state of the state address, indicated Michigan is switching from a manufacturing based economy towards a tourism based economy. Tourists are well known to travel into and throughout Michigan for our natural resources. Michigan DNR CO's have been the main front line defenders of those same resources for over 120 years.

M.C.O.L.E.S.

The Michigan Commission On Law Enforcement Standards (or MCOLES, formerly known as the Michigan Law Enforcement Officers Training Council, or MLEOTC) is a Department of the Michigan State Police (MSP) that sets the standards for, and certifies every law enforcement officer with authority to enforce Michigan state law. For example, every County Sheriffs Deputy, City Police Officer and MSP Troopers are all MCOLES certified. Similar to these examples, MDNR CO's are fully commissioned, uniformed, MCOLES certified, state law enforcement officers with the same authority and jurisdiction as MSP Troopers.

While the MSP employs over 1,700 Troopers, there are only 189 CO's. Conservation Officers and MSP Troopers are not affiliated other than they share the same employer (the State of Michigan), and the same authority and jurisdiction.

Due to the size difference of the agencies, CO's have been referred to as "Little Brothers" of the MSP Troopers.

CO's are required to maintain the same minimum standards of training set by MCOLES as every other law enforcement agency in the state although they exceed those standards in several areas.



MDNR CONSERVATION OFFICERS OATH OF OFFICE

Every MDNR CO raises their hand and swears to the following Oath of Office:

I, (Conservation Officers name), do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I am a citizen of the United States, that I am more than twenty-one years of age, that I have never been dishonorably discharged from the Armed Forces of the United States or the State Militia.

I do further solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support the Constitution of the United State and the Constitution of this State, that I will faithfully enforce the laws of this State and discharge the duties of an officer of the Department of Natural Resources to the best of my ability and will preserve, protect and defend the honor and traditions of the Department of Natural Resources, obeying all rules and regulations and carrying out all orders which may be lawfully given me by my superior officers.

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF CIVIL SERVICE JOB DESCRIPTION FOR CONSERVATION OFFICERS

(Listing only non-supervisory descriptions)
Michigan Civil Service Commission
Job Specification

Conservation Officer

JOB DESCRIPTION

Employees in this job are responsible for the enforcement of laws and rules protecting the public health and regulating the conservation and use of the natural resources of the state. Conservation Officers are peace officers and are also empowered to enforce general criminal laws of the state and enforce the motor vehicle code, drug laws, criminal sexual misconduct laws, etc.

Position Code Title – Conservation Officer (Recruit)-E

Conservation Officer (Recruit) 10

This is the recruit level Conservation Officer, assigned to a mandatory Michigan Commission on Law Enforcement Standards (MCOLES) basic police school. The recruit, in a classroom setting, receives training in basic law, criminal justice system procedures and other training generic to and required for all fully certified law enforcement officers in Michigan. The recruit must satisfactorily pass the recruit school in order to qualify as a fully certified, law enforcement officer in Michigan.

Position Code Title – Conservation Officer-E

Conservation Officer 10

This is the trainee level. During the one-year probationary period, the new officer will receive formal training by attending school to learn conservation officer specific laws, rules and procedures, and other necessary resource and operational training. The remainder of the one-year period is spent on the job and under the supervision and evaluation of a senior field-training officer (and the Training Section for positions located in the Department of Natural Resources). The employee learns and develops the knowledge and abilities required to function as a Conservation Officer. Successful completion of the field evaluation process, passing of formal training examinations, and meeting physical standards are mandatory for continuation of employment beyond the one-year probationary period.

Conservation Officer E11

This is the experienced level. The employee performs a full range of duties associated with enforcing the laws and rules regulating the use of the natural resources of the state. Typically, the employee is assigned to an area of the state and independently patrols the area to prevent law violations; investigates complaints of law violations; and provides a variety of public service to users of natural resources and the general public. Work is typically performed under the direction of the area supervisor, but the officer must routinely exercise extensive independent judgment in making decisions and taking immediate actions without the availability of supervision or direction.

Position Code Title – Conservation Officer-A

Conservation Officer 12

This is the advanced level. The employee performs specialized natural resources law enforcement activities. Additional technical or specialty knowledge is required which must be acquired through formal education or training or extensive on-the-job training. Most advanced-level officers have full-time responsibility for conducting complex criminal investigations of violations of state and federal environmental protection laws or of large scale illegal fish and game operations.

MDNR CONSERVATION OFFICER AUTHORITY

MDNR CO's authority is addressed by the following Michigan laws (in no particular order and not an all inclusive list):

28.6a Conservation officers; appointment by commissioner as state police officers.

The commissioner is hereby authorized, with the approval of the director of conservation and the governor, to appoint any conservation officer as a special state police officer, who shall be vested with the powers of an officer of the state police, and who shall in his capacity as special state police officer be under the direction of the commissioner.

257.602a Failure to stop at signal of police or conservation officer; penalty; subsection (1) inapplicable unless officer in uniform and vehicle identified; violation of subsection (1) as felony; conviction for conduct arising out of same transaction; "serious injury" defined.

(1) A driver of a motor vehicle who is given by hand, voice, emergency light, or siren a visual or audible signal by a police or conservation officer, acting in the lawful performance of his or her duty, directing the driver to bring his or her motor vehicle to a stop shall not willfully fail to obey that direction by increasing the speed of the motor vehicle, extinguishing the lights of the motor vehicle, or otherwise attempting to flee or elude the officer. This subsection does not apply unless the police or conservation officer giving the signal is in uniform and the officer's vehicle is identified as an official police or department of natural resources vehicle.

300.21 Conservation officers as peace officers; powers, privileges, prerogatives, and immunities.

Sec. 1. Conservation officers appointed by the director of the department of natural resources and trained and certified pursuant to the Michigan law enforcement officers training council act of 1965, Act No. 203 of the Public Acts of 1965, being sections 28.601 to 28.616 of the Michigan Compiled Laws, are peace officers, and except as otherwise provided by law, are vested with all the powers, privileges, prerogatives, and immunities conferred upon peace officers by the general laws of this state.

300.22 Service and execution of criminal process; fees.

Sec. 2. Except as otherwise provided by law, conservation officers appointed by the director of the department of natural resources have the same power to serve criminal process and to require aid in executing criminal process as sheriffs, and are entitled to the same fees as sheriffs in performing those duties.

324.1601 Duties of department and appointed officers.

The department and any officer appointed by the department shall do all of the following:

- (a) Enforce the statutes and laws of this state for the protection, propagation, or preservation of wild birds, wild animals, and fish.
- (b) Enforce all other laws of this state that pertain to the powers and duties of the department or the commission.
- (c) Bring or cause to be brought or prosecute or cause to be prosecuted actions and proceedings in the name of the people of this state for the purpose of punishing any person for the violation of statutes or laws described in this section.

324.1606 Department and conservation officer or peace officer; powers and duties; fees; park and recreation officers; enforcement of rules, orders, and laws; powers, privileges, and immunities; arrest powers; issuance of civil infraction citation; appearances; "minor offense" defined.

(1) The department and conservation officers appointed by the department are peace officers vested with all the powers, privileges, prerogatives, and immunities conferred upon peace officers by the general laws of this state; have the same power to serve criminal process as sheriffs; have the same right as sheriffs to require aid in executing process; and are entitled to the same fees as sheriffs in performing those duties.

324.1608 Obstructing, resisting, or opposing officers as misdemeanor; penalty.

A person who knowingly or willfully obstructs, resists, or opposes the department, an officer appointed by the department, or any other peace officer in the performance of the duties and execution of the powers prescribed in this part or in any statute or law, in making an arrest or search as provided in this part, or in serving or attempting to serve or execute any process or warrant issued by lawful authority, or who obstructs, resists, opposes, assaults, beats, or wounds the department, any officer appointed by the department, or any other peace officer while the department or officer is lawfully making an arrest or search, lawfully serving or attempting to serve or execute any such process or warrant, or lawfully executing or attempting to execute or lawfully performing or attempting to perform any of the powers and duties provided for in the statutes or laws described in section 1601, is guilty of a misdemeanor, punishable as provided in section 479 of the Michigan penal code, Act No. 328 of the Public Acts of 1931, being section 750.479 of the Michigan Compiled Laws. In making an arrest or search as provided in this part, or in serving or attempting to serve or execute any process or warrant, the department, any officer appointed by the department, or any other peace officer shall identify himself or herself by uniform, badge, insignia, or official credentials.

324.43103 Prohibited acts; trespass on premises; killing, trapping, injuring or disturbing fur-bearing animal; consent.

Without the permission of the owner of a privately owned fur-bearing animal described in this part, a person shall not enter the enclosure within which the privately owned fur-bearing animal is kept, or trespass on private ground adjoining such an enclosure and knowingly annoy or disturb the animals. A person shall not knowingly and willfully kill, trap, or injure any fur-bearing animal owned by another person without the consent of the owner. However, a duly authorized peace or conservation officer may enter upon such premises in the performance of his or her regular duties.

324.43516 Hunting, fur harvester, or fishing license; carrying license; exhibiting license on demand; firearm deer license with unused kill tag; exhibiting tag on request.

(1) A person who has been issued a hunting, fur harvester's, or fishing license shall carry the license and shall exhibit the license upon the demand of a conservation officer, a law enforcement officer, or the owner or occupant of the land if either or both of the following apply:

- (a) The person is hunting, trapping, or fishing.
- (b) Subject to section 43510(2) and except as provided in section 43513, the person is in possession of a firearm or other hunting or trapping apparatus or fishing apparatus in an area frequented by wild animals or fish, respectively.

(2) Subject to section 43510(2) and except as provided in section 43513, a person shall not carry or possess afield a shotgun with buckshot, slug loads, or ball loads; a bow and arrow; a muzzle-loading rifle or black powder handgun; or a centerfire handgun or centerfire rifle during firearm deer season unless that person has a valid firearm deer license, with an unused kill tag, if issued, issued in his or her name. The person shall exhibit an unused kill tag, if issued, upon the request of a conservation officer, a law enforcement officer, or the owner or occupant of the land.

324.82135 Failure to stop on signal of uniformed officer; penalty; identification of official vehicle.

An operator of a snowmobile who is given by hand, voice, emergency light, or siren a visual or audible signal by a peace, police, or conservation officer acting in the lawful performance of his or her duty, directing the operator to bring his or her snowmobile to a stop, and who willfully fails to obey the direction by increasing his or her speed or extinguishing his or her lights, or who otherwise attempts to flee or elude the officer, is guilty of a misdemeanor. The officer giving the signal shall be in uniform. A vehicle or snowmobile which is used by an officer at night for purposes of enforcing this part shall be identified as an official law enforcement vehicle or snowmobile.

600.8321 Civil process; service.

(1) Civil process in the district court shall be served by a sheriff, deputy sheriff or a court officer appointed by the judges of the court for that purpose, except that officers of the department of state police or conservation officers of the department of natural resources may serve civil process in any action to which the state is a party and police officers of an incorporated city or village may serve civil process in any action to which the incorporated city or village is a party.

Additionally, many Michigan CO's possess federal enforcement authority through a deputization process from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.

MDNR CONSERVATION OFFICER HIRING PROCESS

The LED hiring process has not been consistent. In the past, LED has hired non-MCOLES certified candidates and sponsored those candidates through a police academy. LED has also hired MCOLES certified or certifiable candidates in the past. Some of the hired candidates that were MCOLES certified or certifiable went directly into the FTO process while others were required to attend another MCOLES police academy, despite previously successfully completing a police academy.

LED has determined the best way to hire new recruits is to maintain the extensive 22 week Conservation Officer Recruit Academy. However, this academy is expensive and the lack of funding has, for the time being, suspended this process. LED is now hiring individuals and sponsoring them through a regional academy, or if they are already MCOLES certified, those recruits begin the FTO process shortly after being hired.

The MCOA is skeptical that LED will be able to draw enough highly qualified candidates away from other law enforcement agencies or attract the best non-certified candidates, based on numerous factors such as an inadequate retirement system, the lack of Compulsory Arbitration and a host of other issues addressed within this document.

Individuals interested in becoming a CO must first submit an application and take the Michigan Department of Civil Service-Law Enforcement Entry Examination. This exam is the first step in applying for the positions of Michigan State Trooper, Conservation Officer, Motor Carrier Officer and Capital Security Officer. MSP Troopers and Conservation Officers are certified Police Officers whereas Motor Carrier Officers and Capital Security Officers are not certified Police Officers. The video based exam also entails a written essay and results in a pass or fail score. If the applicant passes the exam, their name is placed on the Civil Service List.

The LED (when approved to hire) sends a letter to everyone on the list indicating if they are interested in becoming a CO they must submit a resume and a current passing score on the MCOLES physical agility exam. LED reviews the resumes and invites only qualified applicants to a mandatory LED orientation. At the orientation, the applicants must complete a personal history questionnaire and a competency based interview is scheduled. Applicants that participate in and pass the competency based interview then undergo a thorough background investigation. Upon completion of the background investigation, selected applicants are invited to the final oral interview. The LED oral interview panel then selects the best candidates and submits their files to the LED Chief for approval. The LED Chief then submits the files to the Chief of Human Resources for approval. The candidate is then presented with a conditional offer of employment contingent upon passing a psychological exam, functional capacity test, MCOLES physical and a drug test. The applicant is then hired as a probationary recruit.

The hiring process begins with (potentially) several thousand applicants on the Civil Service List. However, a fraction of those names on the list actually attended the mandatory LED orientation in order to proceed with the remainder of the hiring process. Each step in the hiring process results in a significant reduction of applicants whether it is by voluntary withdrawal or other elimination factors. Ultimately, the LED hiring process filters out less desired or disqualified applicants resulting in only those applicants with the highest levels of honor and integrity, which is foremost in the occupation of any law enforcement officer.

Previously hired probationary recruits were required to undergo nearly 10 months of extensive recruit training. The first part was the basic police recruit school academy conducted at the Michigan State Police training facility near Lansing. The intensive 22-week program was designed, and was run by, the MDNR LED and was one of only three training academies in the state certified by the MCOLES.



Intense legal training was focused on natural resource, constitutional and general criminal laws. Recruits also received training on physical fitness, first aid, search and rescue, stress reaction and ethics.

CO's are among some of the most highly trained law enforcement officers in the nation.



After completing the academy, recruits participated in an 18-week Probationary Training Program where they worked at several temporary field assignments throughout Michigan with Field Training COs.

The previously utilized LED 22 week basic police recruit school allowed the division to closely evaluate probationary recruits to ensure each recruit possessed the required competencies for the CO occupation.

The current LED hiring process, due to budget constraints, will not require new recruits to attend this academy.



Following successful completion of the probationary training program, recruit CO's received their first assignment. CO's in the field are assigned to one of Michigan's 83 counties as their primary work location depending on LED's operational needs. CO's may request transfers to other vacant work locations after their one-year probationary period has been completed. Transfers are based on seniority and their frequency is at the will of LED management.

There are limited promotional opportunities which include specialist and supervisor positions and usually require relocating your residence and your family. Specialist programs include detective, communications, commercial fish, recreational safety and shooting range positions. Opportunities as a supervisor range from first-line CO supervisors to top-level DNR management.

LED PROMOTIONAL PROCESS

Much to the dismay of Conservation Officers division wide, DNR management has, very recently in 2008 and for the first time in the history of LED, opened up the CO promotional process for Specialists, Sergeant and Lieutenant positions to applicants outside of the Conservation Officer employee pool to any individual meeting the position qualifications. CO's throughout the state voiced their opposition against this practice.

In early 2008, a vacant Lieutenant vacancy was filled with an individual who was not a CO but had previous administrative law enforcement experience. This individual performed the CO Lieutenant job functions for **TWO DAYS** before he submitted his voluntary resignation effective immediately. Since that incident, several CO Sergeant vacancies were opened up, the process again allowing outside applicants. Thankfully every Sergeant selection was a field CO and no individuals from outside the LED were selected. Perhaps DNR management may have noticed the first debacle that resulted from hiring from outside the LED for 1st and 2nd line supervisors.

The MCOA firmly believes that allowing an applicant from outside the LED severely restricts the already limited promotional opportunities for CO's who have been doing the job for years. Within the law enforcement profession as a whole, the practice of hiring individuals for promotional opportunities outside of their own department is ludicrous. Loyalty, morale, and respect (just to name a few) are all areas severely compromised by the adoption of this promotional process.

Another disturbing issue directly pertaining to this promotional process concerns the background investigation, or lack thereof. During the CO recruit hiring process, lengthy and thorough background investigations are performed by trained CO's who are experienced (criminal) investigators. This background investigation entails credit and criminal history checks, contacts with police agencies, former employers, teachers, family, friends and foes. The

CO recruit background investigation intends on leaving no stone unturned. In contrast, it is the understanding of MCOA that the new promotional process for the Sergeant and Lieutenant vacancies (as it pertains to applicants outside of LED) are not subjected to the same level of intense background investigation.

The DNR and LED do not offer supervisory or management training to field level CO's. Without such training or experience, how are field CO's expected to fairly compete against outside applicants that possess such experiences?

The adoption of this promotional process is also another area that will deter prospective applicants from becoming new CO's .

The DNR expects employees (CO's) to be loyal to their employer. However, it has now been made very clear by the adoption of this promotional process, loyalty does not have to be reciprocated by the DNR to its employees.

MDNR CONSERVATION OFFICER RECRUITMENT CONCERNS

For the last ten years, LED has noticed a dramatic drop in the number, and overall quality, of applicants interested in the occupation of a CO. Historically, it was very common to have thousands of applicants competing for, as an example, 10 CO vacancies. Police Officers from other agencies, even the Michigan State Police Troopers, would leave their departments and become CO's. This trend slowed, and has all but nearly stopped, around or shortly after 1997, the same year CO's were stripped of their 25 year Defined Benefit pension system. The 25 yr Defined Benefit pension system was dedicated specifically to CO's due to the hazardous law enforcement nature of their occupation.

As of the last several hiring's of CO's, the applicant pool has dwindled where LED has difficulties drawing enough highly qualified candidates off the Civil Service list to fill the vacancies. As a factual example, in 2006 LED was approved to hire 25 CO's just to try and replace a portion of CO's lost through attrition. LED was only able to draw 21 recruits from the applicant pool that possessed the high level of qualifications LED requires. By the end of the employment and training process, LED was able to keep 14 of the 21 that were hired. Meanwhile CO staffing levels continue to decline.

The MCOA recently requested statistics from the Michigan Department of Civil Service, DNR Human Resources and DNR LED. The information requested from Civil Service was a request to know on how many occasions was the Law Enforcement Entry Exam offered since 1995 and how many applicants took the exam. Additionally, out of those taking the exam, how many indicated interest in the Conservation Officer occupation. The information requested from DNR Human Resources and DNR LED was a request to know how many names were provided from the Civil Service list, how many attended the mandatory LED orientation and then proceeded with the remainder of the hiring process since 1995. The MCOA believes the best factual way to confirm the suspicion about how the loss of the 25 year Defined Benefit pension negatively affected recruitment numbers is to analyze these statistics which would ultimately reveal a timeline illustrating when the applicant pool dropped. Historically, there was never a concern over recruitment prior to the loss of the 25 year pension and there was no other significant change or action dealing with the CO occupation around this timeframe. The MCOA is confident that the drop in the applicant pool occurred after the 25 year pension was taken away from CO's. **Unfortunately, Civil Service has not provided the statistics requested.** LED was only able to provide statistics dating back to 1999. Without the Civil Service and LED comparables illustrating applicant levels prior to 1997, an accurate timeline will not be able to be determined. The statistics LED has provided does illustrate the dramatic drop in the applicant pool as they proceed through the hiring process. Listed is a breakdown of the LED statistics provided.

Hiring Activity	Number of CO applicants by year					
	1999	2000	2002	2003	2004	2006
Passed Civil Service exam & Interest packets mailed out	723	552	1,950	1,549	1,757	1,756
Response to Interest packets indicating interest in CO occupation	207	178	526	400	N/A	N/A
Attend mandatory orientation & pass MCOLES physical agility	114	76	180	173	348	N/A
Resumes screened	N/A	N/A	154	N/A	N/A	N/A
Applicants scheduled for 1 st oral interview	67	76	111	117	165	125
Passed 1 st oral interview	34	32	55	N/A	N/A	N/A
Background investigations	N/A	31	55	N/A	83	65
Passed background investigations	N/A	17	40	N/A	58	48
Passed final oral interview	16	10	21	N/A	N/A	N/A
Passed Medical & Psychological exam/drug test/Functional Capacity test	16	10	21	N/A	20	21
Hired and /or successfully complete Police Academy	16	10	17	N/A	18	14
Successfully completed Field Training Program & off probation	N/A	9	N/A	N/A	N/A	14

Included are two testimonial letters from retired LED management. The MCOA requested only retired management to provide the testimonials because they will be free from any higher authoritative influence within LED or the DNR. The first letter is from recently retired LED Training Section Lt. Thomas Lennox. The second letter is from recently retired LED Chief Alan Marble.

Lt. Thomas Lennox testimonial letter;

Recently, I was contacted by the Michigan Conservation Officer's Association regarding the loss of the 25 year Defined Benefit pension system and how it may have negatively impacted the number and quality of Conservation Officer applicants in past years.

As a former Lieutenant in charge of the DNR Law Enforcement Division Hiring and Training Section from 2001 through 2006, I was involved in four separate employment campaigns. Approximately 70 Conservation Officers were hired as a result. Although each process resulted in the hiring of exceptional candidates, I did observe overall qualified applicant pools progressively decline. By the end of the 2006 hiring cycle, due to a lack of qualified applicants and a continued commitment to hire only the best, LED was unable to completely fill 25 earmarked vacancies.

As I understand from my predecessors in the Hiring and Training Section, this was unheard of in the past. Prior to losing the retirement package, LED consistently dealt with numbers of qualified applicants so large, a lottery system was used to narrow the initial field to a manageable number. Countless well qualified candidates were turned away in hopes of hiring them in the next process.

In 2001, when I took over the hiring process, the lottery idea was abandoned due to the pool becoming a more manageable number. If I recall the numbers correctly, by 2001 the raw pool submitted to us from Civil Service was always near or below the 2500 mark. The Hiring and Training Section was able to send each applicant a letter of interest notifying them of our intent to hire. In my experience, less than half of those sent an initial interest letter would reply back expressing a desire to continue in the process. Of the half responding back, many had unsuitable backgrounds for law enforcement, or failed the required MCOLES physical agility test.

While I can't definitively pinpoint the loss of the retirement package as the single source of our dwindling applicant pool, it is certainly my opinion that it has had a severe negative impact on the process. Throughout each hiring cycle, my staff and I did receive phone calls and letters from potential and current applicants citing the lack of a retirement package as a reason for backing out of or not entering our system. This phenomenon seemed to increase in frequency over the years as more and more candidates discovered we did not have a traditional law enforcement retirement pension. Often times, the more qualified applicants who possessed prior experience and training were the ones removing themselves from the process.

I also believe that during these times of dwindling qualified applicant pools, it is even more critical for the Department of Natural Resources to continue to maintain and operate its own MCOLES police academy. This system creates a setting where all new hires are closely observed and monitored for 22 weeks. I would be greatly concerned about any future hiring process that did not include at least one or both of these critical pieces of the puzzle.

*Sincerely,
Lieutenant Thomas Lennox (Retired)*

LED Chief Alan Marble testimonial letter;

The purpose of this letter is to examine the impact of the loss of enhanced retirement benefits in 1997 which had been enjoyed by Michigan Conservation Officers since being granted by the Michigan legislature in 1991.

I was employed as a Michigan Conservation Officer from November of 1978 until my retirement as Chief of Law Enforcement Division on September 1, 2007. Along the way I served as a field officer in Ontonagon and Wexford counties, as a staff officer supporting and running the Training and Employment Section, as a field lieutenant in Newberry and Bay City and as the captain in charge of staff operations. I was fortunate to gain a broad perspective on recruitment, selection and training issues at each change in my career. Perhaps my greatest satisfaction came from the new faces hired during my tenure, and their desire to serve the public well.

The shifting responsibilities and perspectives afforded me during my career also offered me the opportunity to confront head-on the impact of the loss of the enhanced retirement benefits that Conservation Officers were granted in 1991. I believe it is imperative that a comparable retirement benefit is restored for the long-term success of the division and the individuals it employs.

*The retirement plan that emerged from the legislature in 1991 provided for the following:
Michigan Conservation Officers were eligible for full retirement benefits at any age;*

Officers qualifying had to have a minimum of 25 years of state service: officers currently employed at the bill's enrollment had to have their final 20 years as a Michigan Conservation Officer; persons hired subsequent to the enrollment date had to have their final 23 years employed as a Michigan Conservation Officer;

Qualifying members received a pension equal to 60% of the average of their highest two years of pay.

Efforts to attain the passage of this legislation included many arguments regarding the concepts of parity and safety, and were as follows:

The only other state Law Enforcement agency, the Michigan Department of State Police, enjoyed a 60%/25 retirement;

Most municipal agencies either had, or were moving towards, enhanced retirement benefits for its officers;

Law Enforcement, by definition, is a hazardous occupation which exposes officers to very real threats to their safety and overall health;

Day-to-day duties of conservation officers (operating and manipulating boats, snowmobiles and ORVs) place increased strain on their physical beings;

The very nature of the job....working alone, in remote areas, often on foot and away from back-up or other assistance...and dealing with a high percentage of people who are armed...adds an additional measure of potential hazard.

In retrospect, each of these arguments had merit. Today, facing the impacts of the loss of the enhanced retirement benefit, they have greater validity than ever before. We need to examine the overriding issues of parity and safety in today's world in order to fully understand the impact of the loss of this retirement benefit.

The perception of parity in pay and retirement benefits plays directly to issues of selection of prospective Conservation Officers candidates. The first rule of selecting future law enforcement officers, for any agency, should be to throw the largest, widest net into the pool of candidates in order to capture those persons of the highest integrity, greatest interpersonal skills, and greatest willingness to serve the public. Along the way, it is more critical than ever that the candidate pool includes the greatest diversity possible in gender, ethnic origin and race.

Since the Michigan Conservation Officer lost its enhanced benefits for new hires in 1997, the candidate pool for selection has steadily declined in numbers. At the same time, the mix of diversity in those candidates has also dramatically decreased. We need to consider the following hypothetical scenario:

A 23 year-old graduate of a 4-year criminal justice program is working for a municipal agency and is looking for a change in her career. She has a passion for the out-of-doors and has a strong leaning towards becoming a Michigan Conservation Officer. She is willing to take a minor pay cut to become a conservation officer....she is willing to relocate, recognizing that she will have minimal control over her first assignment. She is willing to surrender the predictability of her current shift in exchange for the helter-skelter hours and public exposure of the conservation officer job. She is willing to accept that promotional opportunities for CO's usually mean relocating, as opposed to the assurances of promotions within her current municipal agency. Then she has to face up to the potential deal-breaker....she has to give up her 60% pension, at only 20 years of service, at any age, for the current-offered State of Michigan Deferred Compensation 401K benefit ...and that she will have to work for 32 years, until at least age 55, to claim the full insurance benefits that attach to state employment.

It is hard to adequately express the intensity of the competition amongst law enforcement agencies for top-drawer candidates. Today's college graduates are savvier when it comes to money and investments than any prior generation. Those persons with the requisite skill set and integrity are in the driver's seat when it comes to choosing prospective employers. Parity, at least in part, is a critical consideration for a person heading into a career in the state of Michigan.

The last issue that demands discussion in regards to parity is that of diversity. The law enforcement Division of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources should be striving to further diversify its work force in order to better reflect the composition of the public it serves, which in turn will inevitably result in a higher degree of public satisfaction. Diversity in the applicant pool has declined dramatically since the loss of enhanced retirement benefits, as has the diversity in the classes of recruit Conservation Officers hired since that time. There is already one built-in obstacle to the recruitment of persons of color, of ethnic origin and women...the vast majority of the clientele of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources are Caucasian males. It is incumbent on the State of Michigan to eliminate other obstacles to effective recruitment and further diversification of its work force.

We also must consider the safety and health issues that attend a career in conservation law enforcement. For me, the most cogent argument in favor of the enhanced benefit during the debate in the late 1980s was that Conservation Officers just plain deserved it.

A typical day for a Michigan Conservation Officer is pretty easy to conjure up. The officer will usually have to enter and exit a patrol truck 20 or 30 times...load and unload an ORV or snowmobile onto a trailer or into

the back of a truck....ride that machine over uneven terrain, confront groups of people who are knowingly violating the law...referee those situations with a mixed approach of tact, courtesy and diplomacy... confront numerous people who are carrying loaded firearms...arrest or take cash bond from an individual who has been determined to be "wanted" on a warrant from a court...load a dead deer into the back of the truck, chase a suspect with a spear fleeing on foot along a muddy bank of a trout stream, and help a senior citizen get unstuck from the sand on a rutted two-track on state land. All the while, that officer has to maintain factual, accurate reports of contacts and actions taken in order to defend against false allegations of mistreatment or other governmental abuse.

Law enforcement, in general, is a young person's job. The physical, mental and emotional demands on that officer are unrelenting. As a former command officer at various levels within Law Enforcement Division, I know that I wanted our officers to be sharp, safe, courteous...genuinely friendly with our constituents, willing to examine each situation for the best possible solution...physically and mentally strong and resistant to the ever-possible threat to their safety. A phrase that sums it up, even though it makes many non-law enforcement administrators uneasy, is that Conservation Officers need to be selected, trained and conditioned in order to engage the public in an effective, friendly manner...and be able to neutralize that person in a moment if a threat of deadly force arises in an instant.

It is well known within the ranks that hunting, fishing, boating, snowmobiling and riding ORVs are hugely popular pastimes with a growing segment of our population who also happen to be career criminals. In November of 1987 I was the driver of the patrol vehicle in a long high-speed pursuit of another vehicle after I had watched the occupants "shining" fields in the middle of the night. We learned in the aftermath that the reason it was such a long pursuit, in which the driver of the suspect vehicle was earnestly avoiding being caught, was that the passenger was an individual who had been recently paroled after serving time for 2nd degree murder, and had pointed his rifle at the driver and made it clear that he did not want to go back to prison.

Every officer, past and present, has such stories to relate. Law Enforcement Division's safety record is an excellent one. I attribute that record to the selection process used by the division, its high demand on training, and to the turnover rate provided by enhanced retirement that allowed officers the ability to leave with their bodies and health intact. That ability is threatened as long as Conservation Officers are denied the option to retire with full benefits at an age earlier than 55.

Michigan was the first state to pay for salaried conservation wardens, beginning back in 1887. Law Enforcement Division is an agency with a proud heritage, and I tried to serve it well during my 29 years with the Department. I hope to continue in my retirement to serve the Division and its members in any way that I can.

Sincerely,

LED Chief Alan Marble (Retired)

Michigan government administrators and officials (the Governor, DNR Director, Civil Service, Human Resources, the legislature, etc...) need to take action by making the occupation of a MDNR CO more sought after by leveling the playing field; otherwise recruitment and morale concerns will forever be a problem. CO's retirement system, wages, and a host of other issues need to be addressed before the MDNR LED will be able to compete with other law enforcement agencies for those highly qualified candidates.

MDNR CONSERVATION OFFICER TRAINING

The LED is committed to the goal of providing every officer with the ability and means to protect themselves, other officers and the people of the State of Michigan. This is accomplished with Required Training (RT) programs, which utilize the most progressive techniques and state-of-the-art training aids available. The safety of all participants is the LED's top priority during RT program training and testing. Safety is never compromised for any reason. All officers, regardless of rank, are subject to the direction and instructions of the training officer during training sessions. RT programs include all training that requires annual testing or qualification. CO's are required to meet all standards of qualification or certification in RT programs on an annual basis. Current RT programs are Firearms, Survival Tactics (ST), Critical Issues and Fit-For-Duty (FFD). RT Programs utilize and incorporate firearms, precision driving, critical issues exam and LED policy instruction as part of its Survival Tactics mindset and tactical thinking.

The LED required firearms training program includes comprehensive instruction on firearm safety, firearm proficiency, and firearm tactics, including officer survival skills, legal requirements and the use of force policy and procedures. The program ensures that each CO is intimately familiar with each of the four LED firearms issued to them. Proficiency and qualification is mandatory. A list of firearms issued include: 40 caliber semi-automatic primary duty pistol, 38 caliber back-up revolver, 12 gauge Police magnum shotgun, and .308 caliber semi-automatic rifle. Qualification, marksmanship and training shoots occur several times annually.

Though not considered a firearm, CO's have been approved to carry Tasers which will increase officer safety. The restrictive budget has been blocking the purchase of Tasers for CO's.

The LED required Survival Tactics program trains CO's in combat strikes, kicks, and takedowns, as well as an emphasis on a conditioned response reaction to multiple different assailant attacks. The ST program evaluates the officer's knowledge of the assailant-subject control continuum, use of force policy, threat assessment skill, tactical thinking and ability to perform ST tactical skills and techniques.

The LED required Critical Issues program and exam requires annual written examinations pertaining to the legal aspects and application of lethal force, high speed pursuits, firearms deployment, intermediate weapon use, and current Michigan law regarding search & seizure. All CO's must score 100% on the exam.

All CO's are annually trained as medical first responders and are typically the first to respond to various accidents occurring on the water, ice, snowmobile trails, highways, and remote backcountry areas. CO's are provided with the training necessary to stabilize a victim until more advanced medical treatment is available. CPR & trauma care are just some of the areas officers are routinely trained in.

Other areas of training include, but are not limited to; updates on legal issues, watercrafts, search & seizure, snowmobiles, off road vehicles, use of force, technology, forensics, narcotics, precision driving, communication and public relations.

LED also has a required For Fit-For-Duty (FFD) program which is mandatory for all CO's hired after October 1st, 1999. The FFD program mandates an annual physical fitness assessment exam entailing 9 tests. Each exercise was designed to measure the CO's strength, conditioning and ability to do essential job functions. The exam entails a hamstring stretch, sit-ups, push-ups, grip strength (both hands), lift test, 30 minute run/walk, static pull and 100 yard dash. If a CO fails to meet the minimum requirements, they are provided with instruction assistance and additional time to train. They would be offered the exam on two more occasions within a short specified time frame. If a CO cannot pass the entire FFD exam after 90 days of training, the CO is placed on administrative leave. The CO may be separated from state service or placed into a new position for which they qualify.

Contact was made with three of the largest Police labor unions within Michigan. Those unions are the Police Officers Association of Michigan (POAM), the Police Officers Labor Council (POLC) and the Michigan Association of Police (MAP). All three unions, who represent the vast majority of Police Officers within Michigan, indicated

they do not have any law enforcement agency that mandates a Fit-For-Duty type program such as LED's. Even the Michigan State Police do not mandate a Fit-For-Duty type program. Essentially, LED is the only known law enforcement agency within Michigan that mandates such physical standards from their officers. Many Michigan police agencies have voluntary, incentive based fitness programs. None are mandatory.

CO's also participate in area Prosecutors updates, training in emergency management and law enforcement drills dealing with mass casualties and emergency response to hostage/shooting situations within our schools.

MDNR CONSERVATION OFFICER STAFFING LEVELS

As of December, 2007, there were a total of 189 fully commissioned Conservation Officers employed by the MDNR-LED. Of the total 189 CO's, 149 CO's actually work the field throughout the state. The remaining 40 CO's includes support staff CO's, supervisors and administrators.

Michigan has approximately 58,809 square miles of land and 40,001 square miles of water encompassing more than 11,000 lakes. This equates to each field CO covering an average of 395 square miles of land, 268 square miles of water and 74 lakes. If you divide the 149 field CO's by Michigan's 83 counties, this equates to 1.7 Conservation Officers for each county.

The staffing figures provided reflect historically low numbers of CO's out in the field performing enforcement responsibilities. As an example, in the year 1980, there were roughly 240 Conservation Officers. As of January, 2008, approximately 43 Conservation Officer positions remain vacant.

HOW MDNR CONSERVATION OFFICERS FIT INTO STATE EMPLOYMENT

As of September, 2007, the Michigan Department of Civil Service indicated there are roughly 53,311 classified state employees in Michigan. Included in this figure are 189 Michigan DNR Conservation Officers. MDNR CO's fill a very unique niche within state government, which makes up less than half of one percent (specifically **.35%**) of the state employee pool overall. Breaking this figure down further, there are only 149 field CO's which makes up **.27%** of the state employee pool.

MDNR CONSERVATION OFFICERS AND THE MICHIGAN POPULATION

As of July, 2007, the U.S. most recent Census figures estimated Michigan's population to be 10,071,822 residents. With MDNR CO's staffing levels at a total number of 189, this equates to 1 Conservation Officer for every 53,290 state residents. Respectively, the historically low number of field CO's conducting actual enforcement efforts is 149 which equates to 1 Conservation Officer for every 67,596 state residents.

MDNR CONSERVATION OFFICER FUNDING

MDNR LED obtains its operating funds from a variety of sources. Listed below is the 2007/2008 operating budget and list of all funding sources.

59.2% = \$18,963,200 GAME & FISH PROTECTION FUND

Financed principally by the sale of hunting and fishing licenses; the fees are set by the legislature. The interest and earnings from the Game and Fish Protection Trust Fund are transferred to this fund for use. The Game and Fish Protection fund is intended to provide financial support for statewide hunting and fishing programs. Management, research, enforcement of fishing and

hunting laws, hunter safety class preparation and presentation, shooting range patrols and acquisition of lands to be used for hunting and fishing purposes are examples of uses of this fund.

13.8% = \$4,435,600 UNITED STATES COAST GUARD GRANT, WALLOP-BREAUX FUND

Funding for the Recreational Boating Safety program is funded by motorboat fuel taxes. Eligible states must have a vessel numbering system; a cooperative boating safety assistance program with the coast guard; sufficient patrol; boating safety education program and a marine casualty reporting system.

4.9% = \$1,579,800 MARINE SAFETY FUND

This fund is financed by 49% of watercraft registration taxes. The funds provide water safety education programs, law enforcement, and establishment of regulations for the operation of watercraft on the waters of this state.

4.8% = \$1,529,700 WILDLIFE RESOURCE PROTECTION FUND (RAP)

\$0.35 from each hunting and fishing license sold is deposited into this fund. Its purpose is to inform the public on the harm of poaching, pay for the investigation of fish and game poaching tips, and offer rewards for information leading to the arrest and prosecution of fish and game poachers. This fund is restricted to game and fish protection activities only.

4.8% = \$1,553,200 STATE OF MICHIGAN GENERAL FUND

By statute, the State General Fund covers all state appropriation, expenditure and receipt transactions, except those for which special constitutional or statutory requirements demand separate fund accounting. Most of the traditional state services are included in the General Fund. The General Fund is financed by what is defined as general purpose and restricted revenue. General purposes are self-explanatory. Restricted revenues are those resources that, by constitution, statute, contract or agreement, are reserved for specific purposes, and expenditures that are limited by the amount of revenue realized. The general fund is used by LED to fund over-expenditures in the marine, ORV, and snowmobile programs. It is also very vulnerable to budget reductions because of its versatility in allowable expenditures. Therefore, the marine, ORV and snowmobile programs are most easily affected when budget reductions are mandated.

4.0% = \$1,286,700 U.S. FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICES GRANT, PITTMAN-ROBERTSON ACT

Funding for hunter education and shooting ranges is derived from one-half of the 11% excise tax on archery equipment and 10% excise tax on handguns, pistols and revolvers. State hunter education programs include the development and implementation of a programmed course of instruction leading toward the achievement of the state's hunter training goals and objectives. Public relations and law enforcement activities are prohibited.

3.8% = \$1,225,000 OFF-ROAD VEHICLE TRAIL IMPROVEMENT FUND

An ORV license fee of \$16.25 is distributed according to law. All funds allocated must be used for projects that are open to the public; signing, improvement, maintenance and construction of ORV trails; acquisition of easements, permits or other agreements for the use of land for ORV trails; and restoration of any natural resources that are damaged due to ORV use.

3.2% = \$1,018,300 SNOWMOBILE REGISTRATION FUND

The Snowmobile Registration Fund comes from the selling of snowmobile registrations (not permits) at \$22.00 each. \$14.00 of this fee is used for law enforcement, safety education, training programs, trail enforcement grants, and financial assistance to counties.

0.6% = \$189,200 PARK IMPROVEMENT FUND / PITTMAN –ROBERTSON FUND

This fund receives revenue from Hunter Safety Ranges and fees from Concessions.

0.2% = \$60,700 ORV SAFETY EDUCATION FUND

This fund receives \$1 from the sale of each ORV license. As its name implies, the fund is to be used for ORV safety education and training programs.

- 0.2% = \$59,700 **FOREST RECREATION FUND**
Revenues derived from forest camping fees and concessions. To be used for the improvement, operation, and maintenance of state forest campgrounds.

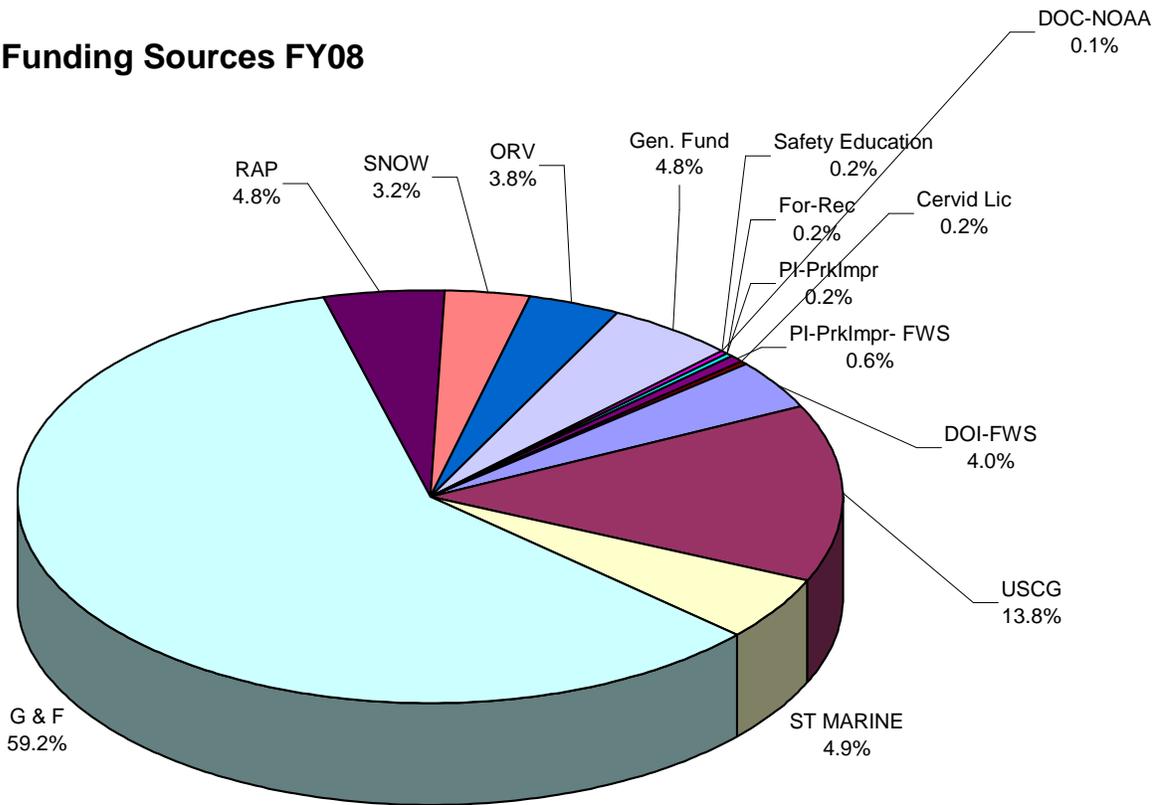
- 0.2% = \$59,700 **STATE PARK IMPROVEMENT FUND**
All revenues derived from, but not limited to, motor vehicle permits, concession fees, leases, camping fees, donations and gifts. To be used for the improvement, operation, and maintenance of State parks and recreation areas.

- 0.2% = \$63,700 **CERVID LICENSE FEE REVENUES**
This revenue is a result of Captive Cervid licenses fees and is used for monitoring, inspecting and enforcement efforts pertaining to Cervid facilities.

- 0.1% = \$18,000 **DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE-NOAA COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT GRANT**
This grant is received from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration – Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary for underwater antiquity enforcement efforts within the sanctuary.

- 100% = \$32,042,600 Reflects LED operations budget for October 1st, 2007 through September 30th, 2008.

LED Funding Sources FY08



The MDNR-LED estimates that in fiscal year 2007/2008, the average cost of one field CO is approximately \$116,500. This figure represents wages, retirement, travel, equipment and operational expenses. If 100 hours of overtime were to be authorized, an additional \$5,000 would be added.

Here is an attempt to put your counties CO into a financial perspective. MDNR-LED has been appropriated \$1,553,200 of your General fund tax dollars. Divide this General Fund allotment by the 10,071,822 Michigan

residents and it equates to each Michigan resident paying .15 cents of their General Fund tax dollars annually for one DNR Conservation Officer in their county. This does not take into account any business tax revenues.

Here are some hypothetical fiscal situations. If each Michigan resident provided .50 cents of their General Fund tax dollars annually, this would equate to \$5,035,911. Respectively, if each resident provided \$1.00 annually, this would equate to \$10,071,822.

Some of the law enforcement situations CO's are engaged in are with non-user groups. This means the law violations may not be directly related to fish, wildlife or other recreational activities. CO's are frequently forced to take enforcement action on drunk drivers, domestic violence situations, narcotics violations and multiple other violations of Michigan law. As Police Officers, CO's can not and will not turn a blind eye to these types of serious criminal activities just because they are outside of their primary efforts. It is common to take the initial enforcement action and turn the violations over to another law enforcement agency. However, other law enforcement agencies are often unavailable which leaves no other option than for the CO to follow through with the entire criminal case all the way through the legal process. CO's will, without hesitation, always intervene in law enforcement situations because they have taken an oath to serve and protect the people within the State of Michigan. CO's will continue to provide initial emergency response when appropriate and always back up any other law enforcement officer when the situation warrants such action.

The Michigan State Police are primarily funded with General Fund tax dollars, an immense but necessary figure. CO's do find themselves in non-user group law enforcement situations and do not hesitate to take appropriate action. It is their responsibility as state Peace Officers. Is it so unconceivable that additional General Fund tax dollars be provided to the LED for their efforts outside of recreational law enforcement?

CO's are an extremely valuable state wide law enforcement presence, however few there may be. Ask yourself, what would you be willing to pay out of your annual General Fund tax dollars for the unique services and protection provided by the MDNR LED-Conservation Officers? Would it more than .15 cents a year?

MDNR CONSERVATION OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES

CO's are assigned to work specific locations of the state, typically by county and work directly from their homes. CO's are obligated to keep records, files and equipment stored at their homes. Unlike all other law enforcement agencies who go to and from their agencies office as civilians and in plain cloths, a CO's home is their office and is visited and telephoned at all times of the day and night by individuals with questions, concerns or complaints. CO's, though they are not compensated accordingly, are virtually always on duty because they never know when someone is going to stop by or call their home.

There are typically, when staffing levels are normal, an average of two CO's in every county. This may vary depending on the counties population, complaint load and activity levels, and the natural resources available in a specific area. CO's are required to keep equipment readily available at their homes and in good working order.

CO's work an 80 hour bi-weekly schedule with 10 out of 14 days scheduled on duty with expectations of working a typical eight hour day. While the shifts worked are typically not specified, CO's are expected to work during peak activity hours. Overtime is not available unless it is prescheduled and authorized by a supervisor. When overtime is authorized, it is usually utilized on holidays, weekends or on target specific details. CO's are expected to "FLEX" their time throughout the individual pay periods. What does "FLEX" mean? As a common example, a CO gets a call at his home on his scheduled day off duty regarding a violation in progress and the CO immediately responds. If that CO worked 6 hours on their day off, there is usually no overtime available and the CO is expected to work 6 hours less on another regularly scheduled work day. Additionally, if a CO works over their 8 hour shift, they are expected to "FLEX" that time later in the pay period. The practice of "FLEXING TIME" is also expected for other obligations such as court appearances. Sheriff Deputies, City & Township Police and the

Michigan State Police all get overtime pay for any time worked beyond their regularly scheduled work day, however CO's unfortunately do not.

CO's routinely conduct uniformed, law enforcement patrols while utilizing fully marked and equipped police trucks.



Other specialized equipment frequently utilized are boats, ORV's and snowmobiles. Pictured below are examples of a Michigan DNR Conservation Officers uniform compliment. The uniform of the day will vary depending on the detail, enforcement activity and/or weather conditions.



CO's responsibilities include enforcing state laws, rules, and other administrative regulations while concentrating on recreational law enforcement. These responsibilities are additional, above and beyond the responsibilities of regular Police Officers. Fish and Game, ORV, snowmobile and marine safety patrols are the frequent norm. CO's frequently communicate and work with county/city prosecuting attorneys and various court systems. CO's are authorized by law to prosecute their own cases, unlike any other law enforcement officer in the state. CO's frequently advise the prosecuting attorneys regarding recreational laws, rules, etc... and commonly act upon the states behalf in court on civil matters dealing with the condemnation of seized property. CO's must possess proficient knowledge of the judicial process and rules. CO's work in conjunction with local, state and federal authorities sharing information accordingly. CO's are also responsible for providing educational and safety instruction. They hold classes educating both youth and adults in the areas of hunter safety, marine safety and snowmobile safety. CO's are responsible for performing safety inspections on vessels for hire in Michigan waters. Other unique areas of responsibility entail investigating and protecting underwater antiquities (100's of shipwrecks), environmental investigations and the arena of tribal law enforcement issues.

The vast majority of a CO's efforts require enforcement patrols in remote areas. This practice is commonly referred to as "WORKING THE FIELD" verses normal Police Officers "WORKING THE ROAD". Understand, CO's, for the majority of the time, work alone without immediate backup assistance available.

Conducting patrols in remote areas (such as swamps, forestlands, waterways, etc...) has proven to be a compromising situation. In an attempt to put things in perspective for the reader, the following situation is offered: A CO contacts an armed intoxicated law violator where his/her physical arrest is required and your location is on a large track of heavily wooded forest land nearly one mile from the nearest named road. While attempting to affect the arrest on the law violator, the suspect becomes hostile and is resisting the CO. Obviously, the CO would

immediately call on the radio and request back-up assistance. Now put yourself into the CO's shoes. How would you the reader, quickly explain your location so help can find you? It takes precious time to explain your location to the closest back-up unit not to mention the time it will take for the assistance to locate the CO. All the while, the CO is responsible for maintaining the situation and the safety of everyone involved. It can take up to an hour or more for assistance to arrive in many situations. Bad things can and do happen to CO's in these types of situations.

The majority of those recreating in Michigan's outdoors are law abiding individuals and CO's tend give the benefit of any doubt. However hardened criminals also use and abuse our natural resources and they don't wear signs on their chest indicating they are the bad guys. When CO's approach individuals with loaded firearms, they don't know if they are an ethical hunter or an intoxicated felon on parole who is not supposed to be in possession of a firearm. CO's must exercise the highest levels of officer safety at all times but on occasion, life threatening situations result and CO's have fallen victims to violent crimes. When regular Police Officers encounter individuals with loaded firearms, they have the ability to use significantly more caution. CO's perform their duties without such a luxury and are often victims of violent, firearm and other weapon related crimes.

Unlike Sheriff Deputies, City Police Officers, Troopers and the like, CO's do not normally have street intersections, addresses or highway markers to provide to dispatch when back-up assistance is required. CO's are usually in the woods, on the water or on the ice. CO's back-up assistance is not (typically) readily available which places CO's at a much greater risk for injury and liability.

CO's are required to lift heavy equipment such as canoes, snowmobiles, ORV's, etc... and place them in and out of the water, snow or ice and onto their trucks and/or trailers. CO's have to be able to lift and drag deer (and other big game) for extended distances over all types of terrain.

CO's respond to and take action in life threatening emergencies. CO's have saved the lives of countless individuals every year.

CO's assist state, federal and local law enforcement with locating marijuana growing operations and locate clandestine labs while afield.

CO Danny Walzak was working a marine patrol detail on the lower Detroit River with his 25' patrol boat. On board the patrol vessel was a sergeant from the Huron Clinton Metropark Police and two Border Patrol agents. A concerned boater came up to the patrol vessel and reported that he had been approached by an 18' vessel and that the operator was asking for directions to Wyandotte. The boater also stated that he observed a brown canvas tarp covering a large object on the passenger side floor of the suspect vessel. The situation appeared suspicious enough that the boater suspected the other person may be trying to smuggle someone across the international boundary (Canada to U.S.).

CO Walzak immediately made way towards the Wyandotte area, about 10 miles to the north. Once in the area, CO Walzak began searching the area for the suspect vessel. During the search, a vessel matching the description with one occupant was observed traveling up-bound in the river. CO Walzak fell in behind the vessel and activated his emergency lights to bring the vessel to a stop. At the same time the operator of the vessel threw (what he claimed to be) a cellular telephone into the water and brought the vessel to a stop. CO Walzak approached the vessel and observed the tarp that was reported by the complainant. Under the tarp were four commercial size laundry bags and four large duffle bags filled with marijuana. CO Walzak boarded the suspect vessel and arrested the local man seizing the vessel and marijuana. The marijuana came to a total weight of 179 pounds and was estimated to have a street value of \$1.2 million.



While CO Walzak's narcotics seizure was most likely the largest in LED history, it is however, very routine for CO's to encounter and take action upon, various narcotic violations on a smaller scale.

Emergency dispatchers throughout the state call upon CO's for a variety of emergency, search and rescue, and investigative type situations. Assisting and backing-up other law enforcement agencies is very common. In many situations, especially in Michigan's more rural regions, the local CO is the only law enforcement officer available for timely emergency response situations.

The Michigan DNR LED publishes a, administratively editorialized, weekly report of CO activities dating back to 1997. They can be viewed online at: <http://www.michigandnr.com/law/ReportYearSelect.asp>

MDNR CONSERVATION OFFICER DETECTIVES

Within the LED structure, there is a Special Investigations Unit (SIU). A promotional opportunity to the rank of detective is afforded to CO's who possess special abilities in investigation. The SIU consists of five detectives and one supervisor. They are plain clothes CO's responsible for major case investigations involving commercialization and any undercover "covert" operations. Poaching for profit has existed since the 1800's. The profit margin in illegal wildlife trade is second worldwide to the illegal drug trade, even exceeding the illegal arms trade. Because of the covert investigations that detectives may become involved with, the job is naturally fraught with danger. During investigations, SIU detectives are often exposed to illegal drug and firearm activity. Because of the nature of the investigations, SIU detectives are often required to spend long amounts of time being with, and at times living with professional poachers. It is not uncommon for detectives working undercover to receive threats of violence to them and their families by the individuals that they are working. These individuals are often the worst type of violators for law enforcement officers to deal with. Poachers of this type are experienced and professional at evading law enforcement. Professional covert operations offer the most efficient, and usually the only method to apprehend these criminals. The LED SIU has successfully completed numerous investigations over the years that have gained national and international attention.

Detectives work closely with federal agencies such as, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, ATF and DEA. They also conduct numerous joint investigations each year with fish and wildlife agencies from other states, at times traveling out-of-state to conduct investigations. Officers that are dedicated to this specialized area must be willing to work long hours conduct long-term highly confidential investigations that may run up to two years length, and have families that can tolerate the officer being away from home for long periods of time working in various dangerous climates.

Officers selected to be detectives receive much specialized training in surveillance, interview and interrogation, specialized audio and video covert equipment operation, undercover operations training and major case management training. Working in this specialized capacity can be very challenging, but also extremely rewarding to officers dedicated to this type of highly specialized law enforcement.

SIU detectives investigate wildlife crimes with far reaching impacts greater than those just here in Michigan. The interstate, intrastate and global impact with these types of investigations is often overwhelming.

MDNR CONSERVATION OFFICER INJURIES & OCCUPATIONAL HAZARDS

Early in this document, there is a list of ten CO's that have made the ultimate sacrifice associated with the occupation of a DNR Conservation Officer. They lost their lives!

Most people would agree that law enforcement is a dangerous occupation. It is well documented that it is a psychologically stressful work environment filled with danger, high demands, fatigue, incredible liability, ambiguity in work encounters, misery and exposure to death. Individuals in the law enforcement occupation are subjected to enduring high divorce rates, high risk for coronary heart disease, and a greater risk of being involved in motor vehicle crash's, just to name a few. Law enforcement officers and CO's deal with some of the most dangerous members of our society and often find themselves as the victims of violent crimes. Upon retirement, it is also documented that retired law enforcement officers suffer higher levels of job-related health problems and depression. While these issues are all a factual reality, many other dangers exist, especially for Conservation Officers.

CO's have been policing the state of Michigan for over 120 years and their primary responsibilities have changed very little as it pertains to fish and wildlife enforcement. When a CO is on foot looking for a poacher, who is also on foot, the job is virtually the same job as it was 120 years ago. However, CO's had to adapt throughout the years with changes in technology, communications and the advancements of motor vehicles such as ORV's, snowmobiles and watercrafts and their effects on the environment.

Recreational law enforcement takes CO's into remote areas of the wilderness subjecting them to higher chances of injury. CO's, by far, deal with and handle more firearms than any other law enforcement agency in the state. Other law enforcement agencies have made comments indicating the occupation of a CO's is extremely hazardous due to the high frequency of contacts they have with individuals with loaded guns while in remote locations. Other law enforcement agencies are fortunate to have the ability to react differently to individuals with loaded firearms.

CO's are required to operate and handle equipment such as ORV's, snowmobiles, watercrafts and other specialized equipment. Handling and operating these types of equipment can be and is hazardous. Despite training and many hours of operational experience, accidents do happen. Basic loading and unloading of this equipment also poses physical hazards. These types of heavy machines will often get stuck and CO's (usually alone) are left with no option other than to just muscle the machines free.

Whether CO's have been participating in required training programs, on routine patrols, trying to catch up to a suspected law violator or engaged in an active pursuit, many, many injuries frequently occur. Some examples of CO injuries are abrasions, lacerations, evulsions, broken bones, concussions, neck and back injuries, nerve damage, ACL injuries and dislocations of shoulders and knees.

The routine environmental conditions CO's routinely work in are on foot in rough terrains, swamps, marshes, steep hills and valley's, on and across frozen bodies of water and in deep snow. Elements such as strong water currents, from sub zero temperatures to intense heat conditions. Increased exposure to the sun while conducting on-water marine patrols increases the risks for skin cancer, and at times, the patrols are in life threatening sea/weather conditions upon the Great Lakes. These examples of a CO's routine working environments have resulted in, but not limited to, injuries such as ankle sprains, blown knees, ligament and tendon damage, muscle tears, frostbite, hypothermia, hyperthermia, and skin cancer. CO's physical and defensive training and duty related injuries run the gamut from minor injuries, defensive injuries, and regrettably, a total of ten (10) Conservation Officers being killed or dieing in the line of duty.

CO's have been beaten, stabbed, dragged by motor vehicles and watercrafts, sustained gunshot wounds, and have been subjected to post traumatic stress. Numerous CO's have been held at bay for hours (held hostage) by violators using loaded firearms and bows.

According to statistics compiled by the LED Training Section, CO's are involved in multiple incidents involving the use of force. The following recent LED statistics are provided:

In 2004 there were 26 use of force incidents involving 39 Conservation Officers.

In 2005 there were 27 use of force incidents involving 39 Conservation Officers.

In 2006 there were 28 use of force incidents involving 33 Conservation Officers.

With current staffing at historic low levels, a generous estimate using the figuring of 160 CO's was used to calculate the percentage at which a CO was likely to be involved in the use of force incident. Using these figures, a CO has a 22% chance of being involved in a use of force situation annually.

Listed below (in no certain order) are several factual situations that CO's have been involved in illustrating their occupational hazards. The CO involved in each incident was contacted by the MCOA or the incident report was reviewed to ensure the accuracy of their situation.

CO's Wayne Coleman and George Ecklebecker were conducting an early morning marine patrol on Lake Michigan during darkness hours. It was late April and lake ice conditions had just opened up. The water temperature was just above freezing and the time was approximately 2:30am. The CO's were investigating illegal commercial fishing operations. The CO's did locate a vessel suspected of illegal activity. The CO's made contact and identified themselves as Conservation Officers and the suspect vessel began to flee. A short pursuit followed but they could not outrun the CO's patrol boat. The suspect vessel came to a stop and the CO's boarded the vessel. While obtaining identification from the suspects, one of the men got to the controls of the vessel putting into gear and rapidly accelerated. CO Ecklebecker was then engaged in a struggle with the operator of the vessel and CO Colman was engaged in struggle with another occupant at the front of the vessel. CO Ecklebecker was thrown off the vessel into the frigid waters of Lake Michigan and the operator accelerated away into the darkness. CO Colman, still fighting for his life aboard the vessel, could hear CO Ecklebecker's voice yelling for help as it faded away, realizing he had been thrown overboard. CO Colman fought off the suspect and was able to draw his service pistol and ordered the suspects to go back and find CO Ecklebecker. CO Ecklebecker was firing shots to any would be rescuer. After about five minutes of searching, CO Ecklebecker was located and pulled from the freezing water. CO Ecklebecker was not wearing appropriate survival gear, which resulted in a severe hypothermic condition and he was unable to speak. CO Ecklebecker's eyes were rolling towards the back of his head and he was not responsive. CO Colman ordered the vessel to shore where additional CO's were waiting. CO Ecklebecker, near death, was immediately taken to the nearest hospital and, fortunately, made a full recovery. The suspects were all arrested and made statements that they wanted the CO's dead.

CO's Greg Beullex, Dan Walzak, Michelle Wiegand were responding to a shooting complaint in a frozen swampy area. As the CO's searched the wet icy area on foot, multiple gunshots rang out and the CO's could hear the bullets zipping over their heads.

CO Henry Miazga, working alone on a waterfowl baiting complaint, escaped a barrage of gunfire directed at him with an untold number of bullets that were within inches of his head and body. Investigators recovered a total of 82 empty rifle cartages that were fired at the CO from an SKS type assault rifle.

CO's Warren MacNeill and Connie Sims were contacted by the local Sheriff Department stating that they had a barricaded gunmen and a subject was holding his family in the house. Upon arrival the CO's were directed by the Sheriff to go through the woods to a location that would enable a visual vantage point into the garage in order to see what the subject was doing. From their location they could see the subject walking around with a large handgun. When the CO's were close enough, they made verbal contact with the subject. During the conversation CO MacNeill was able to convince the subject to allow the CO to enter the house to talk to him. When the CO went in the front door, the subject agreed to allow his family to leave out the back. This was done with CO MacNeill's agreement to come in unarmed (so the subject believed). During face to face conversations the subject retrieved his handgun and took physical control of the situation. Through verbal communications CO MacNeill maintained psychological control. The subject held CO MacNeill for two and a half hours in the garage. During this time he went from suicidal with the

gun in his mouth to confrontational with the gun pointed at CO MacNeill's face. At the end of 2 1/2 hours, CO MacNeill convinced the subject to let him go. CO MacNeill maintained communication with the subject and convinced him to give up by making the promise that he would go with him to the hospital. The subject walked into the center of the driveway in front of the garage and stopped, holding his handgun by the trigger guard. CO MacNeill walked from his concealment and met him in the center of the driveway. When close enough to him, CO MacNeill grabbed the firearm from the subject's hand, as trained in LED's Survival Tactics program, and took physical control of the subject. This was done for two reasons, one to let him know that the CO had him and to give the subject the impression he was now protected from the other agencies there. The subject broke down crying and indicated, "you promised to protect me". The CO kept his promise and escorted him to the mental ward. CO MacNeill learned three things that day. One was the credibility and respect of LED and officers is held very high. Two, is that CO MacNeill could depend on his partner as she was always in sight. And three, is that you can see all 6 rounds in a 357 Magnum Revolver, even the one in the barrel when it is pointed at your face. This incident lasted 6 hours. CO MacNeill received the department's Medal of Valor for his efforts.

CO Justin Vanderlinde, working alone, was patrolling in his patrol truck on a remote county road. The CO came upon a tree lying across the roadway. The uniformed CO exited the marked patrol truck and walked towards the tree to see if it could be moved. The CO heard a high powered rifle shot nearby and then observed the bullet impact in the dirt next to the officer.

CO Terry Short, working alone, was ending a 12 hour workday and was heading towards his residence during darkness hours. The county dispatch advised area law enforcement that a frantic woman called 911 reporting that her ex-husband threatened her and her son with a gun and also fired shots into their house. The woman fled in her car while the ex-husband chased after her in a motor home that he was living in. Dispatch advised the road and direction of travel of the motor home. The CO was on the same road heading directly for the motor home. Within a few minutes, the CO observed the motor home and began to follow it. Having the information that dispatch provided, the CO called in the location, direction of travel and continued to follow the suspect as he was believed to be armed and dangerous. The closest law enforcement back-up unit was over 30 miles away. After following the suspect for a few miles, he pulled into a bar parking lot. The CO activated his emergency lights and then the suspect vehicle exited the bar parking lot, drove over a lawn and a road coming to a stop in another parking lot. The CO used his spotlights illuminating the motor home. The suspect quickly exited the motor home and was aggressively approaching the CO on foot with his right hand in his jacket pocket and yelling at the CO. The CO took cover and drew his service pistol yelling instructions to stop and get his hands up into the air. The suspect continued until he was within 20 feet of the CO never showing his right hand. The suspect turned around and went back inside the motor home. At this time, the victim was at the sheriff's department who relayed further information that the suspect was armed with an AK-47 assault rifle. The suspect also told the wife he was going to kill the first cop that tried to stop him. Dispatch relayed the information to the CO. The CO then observed the rear window shade of the motor home open up. The CO immediately took cover behind his patrol truck keeping constant watch under his vehicle for the suspect walking and also to the side of the patrol truck so he could observe the door of the motor home. A short while later, back-up assistance arrived and began giving verbal commands over the loud speaker instructing the suspect out of the motor home. After several minutes, the suspect exited the motor home and began walking straight back to the CO's position enraged and yelling. The assisting officers were able to sneak up behind the suspect, tackling him and were then involved in a brief struggle. The suspect was controlled and placed in custody. A search of the motor home produced a loaded rifle and two loaded handguns. The suspect later informed a Deputy, the only reason he did not shoot the CO was because he could not see him from inside the motor home.

CO Henry Miazga, working alone, was thrown off a dam falling roughly 20' onto the cement below resulting in serious back injuries.

CO Mike Feagan, working alone, observed fresh ORV tracks on state land in an area where an ORV was not allowed. The CO followed the tracks which lead him to an illegal hunting blind on state land. The CO made contact with a man hunting deer out of the blind and he was asked to produce a deer hunting license. The man was not able to produce a hunting license and he was also advised of other violations pertaining to the ORV use and the hunting blind. The CO asked the man to point his rifle in a safe direction and to unload the gun. The man then abruptly turned towards the CO pointing his lever action rifle directly at him stating "I can't do that". The CO tried to talk the man down but he told the CO "I don't want to shoot you, but I have no choice". The CO, with his hands held up in the air, was never able to safely get to his duty pistol and he continued to try and talk the man down. An undetermined amount of time passed when the man suddenly told the CO to leave. The man continued to point the rifle at the CO as he quickly left the scene. The CO safely left the area and a search for the suspect ensued. An intense investigation revealed the identity of the man who's own son told investigating CO's that his father is not a good person and if he pointed a gun at someone, he meant to shoot that person. An arrest warrant was issued for the man and he was arrested a short time later. It was determined that the man was a convicted felon and should not have been in possession of a firearm. The man faced a jury trial and was convicted of Felon in possession of a firearm, Felonious assault, Possession of a firearm during the commission of a felony. The man is still in prison.

CO's Pete Wright and Darryl Shann were working together patrolling in their marked patrol vehicle. The CO's were advised by their dispatcher that State Trooper George J. Kanyuh was frantically calling for assistance over the radio reporting shots fired. The CO's were only a few miles away from the Troopers location and immediately responded to the scene. Within a few minutes the CO's arrived at the scene and found the bleeding Trooper taking cover behind his squad car and a man armed with a scoped hunting rifle crouched down in the ready to shoot position roughly thirty feet in front of the Troopers car. The CO's immediately took a position of concealment shouting commands to the armed suspect to drop his gun however the suspect continued to advance towards the injured Trooper. The Trooper yelled to the CO's informing them that the suspect shot him in the head and to shoot the subject. CO's Wright and Shann opened fire on the armed suspect, hitting him several times causing the suspect the collapse. The suspect was then secured and taken into custody. Trooper Kanyuh credits CO's Wright and Shann with their rapid response and heroic actions as preventing the strong possibility that the armed suspect would have killed Trooper Kanyuh or other innocent bystanders. The suspect was convicted of Felonious assault and sentenced to 4 years in prison.

CO Mike Hanson was working alone in a gravel pit that had been turned into a swimming and fishing area. As he checked the area, he observed four individuals tossing beer bottles into the water and they were wearing biker gang colors. CO Hanson approached cautiously, obtained identification, and returned to his patrol vehicle where he wrote litter citations. When CO Hanson returned to the beach area, the four bikers jumped him as the suspects had hidden behind a cement wall. All of the people at the beach left the area and not one person called 911 to report the fight. CO Hanson was beaten with fists, feet, and elbows lasting almost 45 minutes. Towards the end of the assault, one of the bikers pulled a stabbing pin and tried to drive it into the CO's chest. CO Hanson was able to block most of the blow resulting in minor penetration. The stabbing wound was located at the sternum, and had it been deeper, the wound have been fatal. CO Hanson was finally subdued by the force of the four bikers and was not able to fight anymore. One of the bikers took CO Hanson's gun and put it to the CO's left temple. At that time CO Hanson asked them to surrender because the State Police were on the way. The bikers laughed but it bought time to talk. CO Hanson convinced the bikers they had better surrender because it would go easier for them in court. CO Hanson reminded the bikers that their Identification had been documented when he wrote the citations and that would cause them to be prime suspects if he was killed. The bikers did not surrender, but they did leave the CO alive. The suspects were all identified and hunted down by State Troopers and the Detroit Police Felony squad. Three of the bikers were caught while the fourth escaped to the west coast where he was killed in a gang fight. The three bikers were found guilty of assault with the

intent to do great bodily harm less than murder and felony firearm. CO Hanson expressed he is very lucky to be alive.

CO Warren MacNeill was conducting a foot patrol around 4am targeting illegal fishing activity in a Lake Huron boat harbor. A small motor boat came into the harbor and was not using the required navigational lights. The boat stopped and the two occupants begin to attempt to snag fish. After a short observation time, they motored to the CO's location along the shore. The CO, using his flashlight, guided their boat onto a sand bar. The suspects, at this point were still unaware CO MacNeill was a Police Officer. Their boat was about 10 feet from the CO's location and he could hear their motor hit the sand bar. CO MacNeill then illuminated his uniform with his flashlight and identified himself. CO MacNeill informed the suspects they were under arrest and to come to shore. At this time the man in the front of the boat yelled, "Cops, go". The man in the back of the boat then motored up and turned the boat out from shore. Their motor was in the sand and the boat had very little forward motion. CO MacNeill ran into the water and grabbed the back of the boat and re-identified himself. The man at the back of the boat then grabbed the CO's wrists and yelled, "Let go". The CO again identified himself and ordered him to stop. At this time the suspect stood up and stomped CO MacNeill's right hand. The stomp made the CO release his right hand and was then drug behind the boat by my left hand with the driver hanging onto his wrist. CO MacNeill regained his hold with his right hand and the suspect continued to stomp his hands again. CO MacNeill was being dragged behind the boat into deep water. CO MacNeill would have let go of the boat but did not know if he would be able to swim back to shore with all his gear on. The suspect continued to stomp on his hands and then CO MacNeill's head. At one point the suspect stood up and violently turned the motor into him. The propeller struck CO MacNeill on the gun belt leaving cuts. Knowing the propeller would most likely kill him, CO MacNeill turned his body to the side. At one point CO MacNeill was able to pull himself halfway into the boat and retrieve his flash light from the bottom of the boat. He then struck the assailant on the leg with the flash light which made him fall to the bottom of the boat. CO MacNeill was then able to use his body as a rudder and steer the boat towards shore where his VCO (Volunteer CO) had waded out to chest deep water. The VCO struck the front of the boat steering it straight into shore. Upon striking the shore the subject fell to the bottom of the boat. From the bottom of the boat he retrieved a knife and continued the assault. At this time the VCO forcefully pushed his flashlight into the side of the assailants head. This gave CO MacNeill time to recover and draw his firearm and make a successful arrest. Once in the jail the main assailant provided false identification. The suspect's wife had called in providing his identity and this was confirmed through a fingerprint search. The suspect had a long criminal record of violent crimes. CO MacNeill maintained communication with the suspect's wife while he was incarcerated. She kept begging that the suspect remain in jail as she was in fear of her life. After a while the subject was able to post bond. Within a couple of days the subject's wife was found dead with a shotgun blast to the face. The local police knew he did it but were unable to prove it. Through plea agreements the subject received 9 months in the county jail. While the subject was in jail CO MacNeill was contacted by his cell mate telling informing him that the subject intended to finish the job when he got out of jail. CO MacNeill's family lived with that cloud for several years after the incident. CO MacNeill was told at the plea agreement that this type of stuff is what game wardens deal with. He was also told that the outcome probably would have been different if it was another type of Police Officer. Since this incident, CO MacNeill has been contacted by Interpol as the suspect was also believed to be involved with another homicide.

CO Arther Leitz was in a shootout with a trapper on Tawas Lake. CO Leitz was shot in head and leg with a shotgun. CO Leitz shot the suspect once in the arm and was still able to arrest the suspect despite his injuries.

CO Ron Kimmerly, working alone in a remote area, observed a slow moving truck occupied by two individuals. CO Kimmerly suspected the occupants were road hunting and eventually attempted to perform a traffic stop on the truck. The suspect truck slowed down and a male passenger jumped from the truck holding a rifle and ran into the woods. CO Kimmerly chased the armed suspect on foot yelling commands to stop and to drop the gun, running 288 yards. The armed suspect stopped running, turned around and stated "I'll F#@king blow you away", raising the rifle to his shoulder into the shooting

position. CO Kimmerly, about 15 yards away from the suspect, immediately drew his service pistol, dropped to his knees and fired two shots at the suspect with both rounds striking a small tree directly in front of him at center mass. The suspect then threw his rifle and took off running again. CO Kimmerly continued to pursue the suspect and eventually took him down. A struggle ensued however CO Kimmerly successfully controlled the suspect and placed him in handcuffs. Miraculously, the suspect was not struck by the shots fired. The suspect's rifle was recovered and found to be loaded in the chamber and the safety was off. The suspect was a Felon in possession of a firearm and he had previously served 5 years in prison for burglary, assault, and was also charged in the state of Florida with sexual assault. The suspect had several warrants out for his arrest at the time of the incident for narcotics violations, Fleeing and Eluding Police (a DNR warrant) and a Bench Warrant.

CO Craig Grey, working alone, overheard a dispatch report of a car in the ditch and the driver was highly intoxicated. CO Grey was very close to the location and responded. Upon arrival at the scene, the driver attempted to leave the area on foot. CO Grey identified himself as a Police Officer and informed the man he was not free to leave and instructed the suspect to provide his identification. CO Grey made observations indicating the suspect was intoxicated. CO Grey began a safety pat-down of the suspect and then observed a female on a nearby payphone sobbing hysterically. The suspect again began to leave the area on foot disregarding CO Grey's verbal commands to stop. The suspect continued walking away and CO Grey was forced to physically intervene. CO Grey began a control technique when the suspect pulled away and told CO Grey, "Lets box it out". As the suspect advanced to throw a punch, CO Grey utilized an appropriate kick technique striking the suspect in the midsection. As a result of utilizing the kicking technique, CO Grey seriously injured his knee hindering his ability to defend himself. The suspect managed to repeatedly hit CO Grey in the face with his fists between 20-30 times. CO Grey attempted other striking techniques and used pepper spray on the suspect which had no affect. CO Grey was able to get the suspect into a headlock taking him to the ground. The suspect aggressively grabbed CO Grey in the groin and then tried to remove CO Grey's sidearm from his holster now becoming a potentially life threatening situation. CO Grey applied more pressure to the suspect while in the headlock and was able to yell for help to two individuals standing close by. The two nearby men did provided assistance and the suspect was successfully placed in handcuffs. CO Grey immediately sought medical attention for a blown knee, blood coming from his ears, swelling to his face and broken ribs. The suspect had consumed a large quantity of alcohol along with stolen prescription medication, and was also under the influence of marijuana. The hysterically sobbing female on the nearby telephone, as it was later discovered, had also been raped by the suspect.

CO's Tim Burke and Juris Didrichsons were patrolling for night deer shining activity in Tuscola County and CO Burke was driving. Responding to a complaint, the CO's observed a vehicle shining, and closed to within 100 feet of the suspects without alerting them. When the emergency lights were activated, the suspect vehicle immediately accelerated. The CO's noted that the vehicle was a late 70's model Chevrolet Blazer, and that the license plate had been covered by a strip of duct tape. The pursuit lasted roughly 4 miles with speeds ranging from 60-90 mph. Almost from the beginning of the pursuit, a handheld spotlight was shined back at the CO's from the passenger side window of the suspect vehicle in an attempt to blind/distract the CO's. At this point during the pursuit, the CO's estimated their speed between 60-70 mph when they heard a loud "boom" and CO Burke felt a sharp pain in his left eye as blood began to come from his face. CO Burke realized he had been shot and safely brought the patrol vehicle to a stop. An ambulance was summoned to their remote location and transported CO Burke to a hospital. The resulting investigation revealed that the suspects shot a 30.06 rifle at the CO's striking the hood of the car at a flat angle about 18 inches from the windshield. The bullet deflected up, hitting the windshield and then the top of the dashboard, breaking up in the process. The largest chunk of the bullet struck CO Burke in the lip, below and to the left of his nose, and then hit his upper denture which shattered and deflected it up through his left sinus and lodged against his skull, where it remains today. Another piece of the bullet shattered the left lens of CO Burke's eyeglasses driving glass fragments into his eye. The rest of his face was pock marked by numerous small fragments. The suspects, both in their early 20's, were initially charged with

attempted murder however an inexperienced assistant prosecutor pleads the charges down. The circuit court judge diverted from the sentence agreement in the plea bargain, sentencing both to the maximum, 40 months in prison. CO Burke still has strong memories of the incident. The first is very positive, he had determined that he didn't have an immediate fatal wound and was going to live. The second and third are both negative. One was the look his partner's face as they waited for the ambulance to arrive. The last, and worst, was the look on CO Burke's wife's face when the MSP Troopers brought her in to the emergency room.

CO John Wenzel, working alone, was checking a boat launch site near a small town that was having a city fireworks display. At the same time, the Sheriff's Department was sent to a fireworks complaint nearby. CO Wenzel, in the immediate area, was close to the complaint so he responded to observe the area. There were about 300-350 people watching the fireworks and he then observed a group of kids shooting fireworks and throwing things at passing cars and into the crowd across the street. CO Wenzel made contact with the kids, got ID and kicked them loose. CO Wenzel pulled out into traffic when a car pulled out in front of him, causing the CO to hit his brakes. The suspect vehicle then accelerated through town at a high rate of speed. CO Wenzel followed the car and believed the operator may have been intoxicated. CO Wenzel eventually conducted a traffic stop in front of one of the local bars. The driver, yelling obscenities at the CO, told him to get out of there before he got hurt and then rolled up his window and locked his door. A LARGE crowd then came out of the bar and from the fireworks area. The crowd was also yelling at the CO telling him to leave while throwing objects at the CO and his patrol truck. About 8 minutes later, a Sheriff's Deputy arrived and was also hit by rocks and fireworks. The crowd had become an extremely hostile mob and a riot ensued. The County activated the Emergency Management System and every dept in the county sent officers including, the Sheriff's Department, the MSP, 2 nearby City Police agencies, and the US Forest Service law enforcement officers. Several people were arrested for Disorderly Conduct. The driver was arrested for inciting a riot, reckless driving and violation of a restricted driver's license. CO Wenzel fortunately escaped physical harm however his patrol truck was badly damaged.

CO Duane Painter, working alone in a remote wooded area, was attempting to effect an arrest on a suspect for a narcotics violation. The suspect refused to exit the vehicle. CO Painter, while utilizing appropriate extraction techniques, was forced to fight with the suspect. The suspect pinned CO Painter's hand inside the vehicle and then accelerated away dragging CO Painter 253' on a rough two track. Fortunately, CO Painter did not sustain serious injuries and was able to arrest the suspect. The man was sentenced to 4 years in prison.

CO's Tim Kochanny and Wayne Coleman were aboard an antiquated patrol boat taking part in a detail on Lake Michigan. The CO's concluded their efforts at approximately 6:15pm and began to make their way towards port approximately 30 miles away. The sea conditions that day were sunny and calm. As the CO's made their way back, the weather conditions abruptly worsened with rain, wind, and storm clouds resulting in dangerous lighting and building seas. The CO's put on their protective survival gear and continued to head towards port. At 7:30pm, wave conditions had grown to 4'-6' seas. At 8:00pm the wind and waves continued to build into 6'-8' seas. At 8:30pm the CO's found themselves in 8'-10' waves and were fighting to maintain control of the old patrol boat. The old steel patrol boat had a top speed of 9 knots and the officers were in following seas, meaning they were going in nearly the same direction as the waves. The CO's held on as the monstrous waves picked up the back of the vessel and would swing the boat sideways. This then caused the vessel to pitch and roll nearly capsizing the vessel on more occasions than they could count. The waves, still building, were then at least 12' seas. The patrol boat would literally surf down the huge waves at recorded speeds of 16.5 knots, much faster than the boat as designed to go. Over the next three hours, the nose of the patrol boat continually dove under the waves as it reached the trough of the sea. The CO's believed they would not live through the experience. At 10:30pm, the CO's could see light from land. They agreed that they would have only once chance to enter the narrow channel leading to cover and if that failed, they would run the vessel as close to the shoreline as possible and take their chances with the thundering surf. As the patrol boat approached the pier a large

wave picked up the boat, turning it sideways placing it on a collision course with the seawall. Another wave came and picked up the boat again and the CO's were looking down at the pier. The patrol boat heeled sharply and landed safely between the break walls. The CO's were astonished they did not capsize and drown as a result of the experience. The antiquated 62 year old patrol vessel was taken out of service shortly after this incident.

CO Kelley Nightlinger, working alone, was investigating a subject who was fishing without a license. The subject would not produce positive identification and eventually physically assaulted CO Nightlinger by kicking her. The suspect fought his way back to his truck, slamming the door onto CO Nightlinger's hand trapping 3 fingers inside the completely closed door. The suspect floored the accelerator on the truck while in reverse dragging CO Nightlinger 106' before she was able to tear her fingers from the door. The suspect was apprehended minutes later by responding back-up units who also had to fight with the suspect. CO Nightlinger, bloody from her injuries, sustained serious injuries to her hand as her skin was torn from her fingers exposing her finger bones. It was later determined the suspect was a recently dishonorably discharged Navy Diver with previous combat training. The suspect was in possession of crack cocaine, marijuana and had multiple warrants for his arrest. CO Nightlinger has permanent injuries and arthritis as a result of the assault. The suspect was convicted of Felonious Assault on a Police Officer causing serious injury. A liberal Ann Arbor Judge sentenced the suspect to 19 days in jail and 6 months probation.

CO's were utilizing the 40' Great Lakes patrol boat, "WILLIAM ALDEN SMITH", conducting general marine patrol functions on the St. Mary's River system. Upon returning to port, CO's observed a fresh bullet indentation into the thick aluminum gunnel directly below the helm seat. The CO's on the boat were unaware that they had been shot at. MSP evidence technicians confirmed the indentation was consistent with a gunshot. The indentation remains in the side of the ship.

There are numerous incidents where CO's have been surrounded by hostile mobs, anti-government militia organizations or held at gunpoint for lengthy periods of time by law violators.

There are numerous life saving awards presented to CO's throughout the state for their heroic efforts in the preservation of someone's life, and in many cases, without regard for the CO's own safety. The term "HEROS" would be very appropriate in these cases.

There is simply too many life threatening, hazardous or life saving situations to depict in this document.

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) results from serious, life threatening situations. PTSD is an emotional illness that develops as a result of a terribly frightening, life-threatening, or otherwise highly unsafe experiences. How many of the above noted CO experiences qualify? The MCOA suggests all meet PTSD criteria along with many, many more. There are endless examples of hazardous and life threatening work related experiences that CO's have faced and PTSD is an occupational reality.

The MCOA hopes that you, the reader, are now provided with an appreciation for what CO's do and understand the potential hazards that they face. There should be no question in your mind that the occupation of a Michigan Conservation Officer is just as hazardous as any other law enforcement officer in this state, if not more so. The families and friends of the ten CO's listed in the front of this document would certainly agree.

Retired MDNR CO John Walker has written a series of books (Stories from a Game Warden) pertaining to MDNR CO experiences, some of which date back to the early 1900's. At least one of books, "The Old School" depicts assault type situations against CO's.

AGE FACTORS OF MDNR CONSERVATION OFFICERS

Law enforcement, in general, is an occupation for the young and agile. Research has shown that older law enforcement officers cost more, are less productive, and incur injuries easier and more frequently. If you now factor in the responsibilities of a Conservation Officer, above that required of traditional law enforcement, it should be obvious that individuals in the later years of their careers do not belong in the field conducting CO responsibilities.

Many assume that a career driving a truck over rough terrain, hiking through hardwoods and swamps, utilizing ORV's, snowmobiles, and watercrafts is a dream job. When you're a young C.O., it most definitely is! But as CO's age through their careers, it unfortunately becomes a painful experience. CO's look at these pieces of equipment as tools of their trade. A career of utilizing these heavy machines results in many health related issues such as leg, arm, back and neck problems. There is often soft tissue damage and resulting arthritis.

A reasonable individual can not realistically envision a seasoned 50-60+ year old CO being as productive as 21-45 year old CO. Law enforcement officers, in general, should not be conducting law enforcement responsibilities much past the age of 50, especially C.O.'s.

Unfortunately for MDNR CO's hired after 1997, the current Deferred Compensation Retirement system requires 30 years of service. A CO would have to be hired in their early 20's in order to exit the profession at a reasonable age. However, recent LED hiring practices have resulted in the hiring of individuals more typically in their late 20's and early 30's. This hiring practice will result in an abundance of CO's performing field enforcement activities when they are in their mid to late 50's and 60's. If the retirement system does not change, in 20 years, the LED Conservation Officer work force average age will be (predominantly) in their 50's and 60's.

The demands, both physical and psychological, on CO's in this day and age are more suited for younger men and woman. The direction of law enforcement in general, is becoming a highly skilled and technical field, requiring higher education and technical skills. 25 years of service (not to mention 30 years) in any occupational community that requires so much out of a professional, is indeed no easy feat. Reason and logic would lead any reasonable individual to concur about the importance of a youthful DNR Law Enforcement Division.

CONSERVATION OFFICER OCCUPATION AFFECT ON PERSONAL LIVES

The law enforcement profession is evermore becoming complex and stressful with consistently increasing personal liability. Solid research has shown the life expectancy, after retirement, of a law enforcement officer is much shorter than that of the general population. The suicide rate, divorce rate, and a host of other health related issues, including alcohol abuse, is much higher for law enforcement officers than the current national averages. Unique occupational stresses: various shift work, sleep deprivation, critical incident exposure, cumulative and organizational stress, and leadership issues all play a part. Lack of proper diet and exercise coupled with the many stresses of the job is a disastrous recipe often ending in premature death, or a life which, at best, may be categorized as non-wellness.

Family issues also play a major role in the overall health and wellbeing of a CO. CO's are required to work out of their residences and subsequently expose their families to their communities' law enforcement issues. It is usually no secret where the local Conservation Officer resides. As a result, personal and family stresses evolve. For example, strangers knocking on their door or telephoning their homes occurs at all hours of the day and night. It is commonplace where a CO sits down with their family for dinner and the telephone rings with a complaint. CO's homes and families have been targets of retaliation from the criminal elements of society they are required to police. CO's required exposure of their personal lives has resulted in retaliatory issues ranging from beer cans thrown in their driveways, harassment of their children, windows being shot out and arson of their personal property.

The information listed below is a factual example of what can and has happened to MDNR Conservation Officers; John Jurcich has been employed as a Conservation Officer since 1989. He lives with his wife and their two children on a small farmstead in Muskegon County near the town of Whitehall where he has patrolled since 1991. On the night of April 15th, 2004 just prior to midnight, an arsonist entered the families yard and set fire to their historic two story wooden barn, the centerpiece of their yard and located only 90 feet from the residence. On this evening, winds were gusting to 25 mph and quickly fanned the blaze consuming trees and starting a brush fire heading towards a neighbor's house.



The barn and its contents were burned down to the ground and the families' peace of mind was forever changed.



The next morning, it was noted that the fire was stopped as it was reaching the propane tank near their home. Fire investigators discovered numerous clues indicating the fire had been intentionally set, and by the nature of the clues left behind, the arson was to target John and his employment as a Conservation Officer. Investigators narrowed their search to two local individuals who had been arrested and convicted for deer violations where CO Jurcich was the investigating officer. To date, no one has been charged with the arson and the case remains open with certain details remaining confidential to assist with the investigation. It was absolutely clear that revenge against the CO was undeniably the motive in this crime.

The losses totaled roughly \$190,000 as the barn served as a garage and storage area for the entire family. Tools, outdoor gear, tractor, boat, ORV, bikes, and children's affects were some of the items lost in the fire. While the building and most items have been replaced, the incident left the family in a very fatiguing and emotional struggle over time and money while trying to bring back a sense of security for their children.

Many examples exist. Simply inquire with any active or retired CO for corroboration.

A CO's personal life is exposed to the general public and to the criminal elements of our society. This directly affects the health, emotional stability and harmony of every CO's home. As a result, CO's, their children, spouses and significant others are all victims of this unique job stress.

MDNR CONSERVATION OFFICER UNION REPRESENTATION

MDNR Conservation Officers have been designated into an area of state government called the Safety and Regulatory Unit. As of October, 2007, the Safety and Regulatory Unit of state government consisted of roughly 1,405 state employees encompassing more than 33 different job titles. **MDNR CO's are the only uniformed, MCOLES certified, fully empowered Police Officers within the Safety and Regulatory Unit.** No other group of employees within the Safety and Regulatory are uniformed, front line law enforcement officers empowered with full enforcement authority and jurisdiction anywhere in the state of Michigan.

A majority vote of the Safety and Regulatory Unit members has resulted in union representation by the Michigan State Employees Association or, more commonly referred to as MSEA. The MSEA negotiates the primary and secondary contract for the entire Safety and Regulatory Unit.

Of the 189 MDNR CO's, only 149 MDNR CO's are represented by the MSEA because all supervisors and administrators are represented otherwise. MSEA represented CO's make up 10.6% of the 1,405 Safety and Regulatory Unit members.

MDNR CO's firmly believe that they do not belong within the Safety and Regulatory Unit because of their law enforcement responsibilities that are unique to their occupation and the vast differences between the other Safety and Regulatory Unit job titles listed below.

SAFETY AND REGULATORY UNIT

Attorney General Investigator-E	
Attorney General Investigator-E	
Attorney General Investigator-E	
Attorney General Investigator-A	
Auto Regulation Investigator - E	
Auto Regulation Investigator - E	
Auto Regulation Investigator - A	
Boiler Inspector - E	
Boiler Inspector - A	
Bridge Safety Officer - E	
Bridge Safety Officer - E	
Bridge Safety Officer - A	
Building Code Inspector - E	
Building Code Inspector - A	
Child Support Specialist - E	
Child Support Specialist - E	
Child Support Specialist - E	
Child Support Specialist -	
Conservation Officer (RCRT) - E	**
Conservation Officer -E	**
Conservation Officer -E	**
Conservation Officer -SR-A	**
Conservation Officer -SPL-SS	**
Construction Safety Inspector - E	
Construction Safety Inspector - A	
Construction Safety Inspector - SS	
Corrections Investigator - E	
Corrections Investigator - E	
Corrections Investigator - SR-A	
Electrical Inspector - E	

Electrical Inspector - A
Elevator Inspector - E
Elevator Inspector - A
Emissions Test Station Inspector-E
Emissions Test Station Inspector-E
Fire Safety Officer - E
Fire Safety Officer - E
Fire Safety Officer -A
Fire Crash Rescue Officer - E
Fire Crash Rescue Officer - E
Fire Crash Rescue Officer - LW-A
Fire Safety Inspector - E
Fire Safety Inspector - E
Fire Safety Inspector - A
Forest Fire Officer - E
Forest Fire Officer - E
Forest Fire Officer - E
Forest Fire Officer - A
Fruit/Vegetable Inspector - E
Fruit/ Vegetable Inspector – E
Fruit/ Vegetable Inspector - E
Fruit/ Vegetable Inspector - E
Hazardous Mtrls Storage Insp - E
Hazardous Mtrls Storage Insp - E
Hazardous Mtrls Storage Insp - A
Hazardous Mtrls Storage Insp - SS
Life Guard
Lift/ Ride Inspector
Lift/ Ride Inspector – A
Mechanical Code Inspector - E
Mechanical Code Inspector - A
Motor Carrier Investigator
Motor Carrier Officer - RE
Motor Carrier Officer - E
Motor Carrier Officer - E
Occupation Safety Inspector - E
Occupation Safety Inspector - E
Occupation Safety Inspector - A
Park & Recreation Ranger - E
Park & Recreation Ranger - E
Park & Recreation Ranger - E
Park & Recreation Ranger - LW-A
Parking Officer - E
Parking Officer - E
Parking Officer - LW-A
Plant/ Apiary Aide
Plumbing Inspector - E
Plumbing Inspector - A
Property Security Officer (RCRT) - E
Property Security Officer - E
Property Security Officer - E
Property Security Officer - A

Railroad Safety Inspector - E
Railroad Safety Inspector - E
Regulation Agent - E
Regulation Agent – E
Regulation Agent - E
Regulation Agent - A
State Worker
State Transitional Professional - E
Vehicle Safety Inspector - E
Vehicle Safety Inspector - E
Weights/ Measures Inspector - E
Weights/ Measures Inspector - E
Weights/ Measures Inspector - A

** Employees in this class are law enforcement.

Not to demean the importance of any job title listed above, and while they may be subjected to their own occupational hazards, but one must ask how the hazardous law enforcement occupation of Conservation Officers can be fairly negotiated along with Elevator Inspectors or Fruit/Vegetable Inspectors. The occupation of a MDNR CO is radically different than any other job title listed within the Safety and Regulatory Unit. Because CO's have been designated within this vast group of job titles, CO's repeatedly fall behind the acceptable norm when it comes to law enforcement contract negotiations.

MDNR CO's firmly believe they should be separated from the Safety and Regulatory Unit so they can fairly negotiate concerns specific to their law enforcement occupation, just as every other uniformed, certified Police Officer in the State of Michigan.

MDNR CONSERVATION OFFICERS LACK COMPULSORY ARBITRATION

As you have discovered from the previous readings, Michigan DNR CO's are most certainly public Police Officers. Michigan law indicates it is illegal for public Police to strike. To avoid Police strikes, Michigan law, Act 312 of 1969, section 423.231, provides that Police have the right to compulsory arbitration. Compulsory arbitration forces two sides, labor and management, to undergo arbitration. Arbitration is a form of dispute resolution and is the private, judicial determination of a dispute, by an independent third party.

Compulsory arbitration, in short, usually deals with employee/employer contract disputes during and following negotiations. All other Michigan law enforcement agencies (City Police, County Sheriff's, Township Police and the MSP) are legally required to undergo compulsory arbitration should the two sides fail to reach an agreement through the regular system of collective bargaining. Collective bargaining is the negotiation conducted between employees and employers to determine wages, hours, rules and working conditions. CO's, unfortunately, have found that this process is more similar to Collective Begging.

Unfortunately for CO's, the legal definitions of this same law excludes specific mention of state law enforcement officers. All other city, county, village and township Police Officers possess and practice the right of compulsory arbitration. The Michigan State Police successfully managed to gain compulsory arbitration by securing the majority vote on a general election ballot in 1978.

Despite the law itself indicating it should be liberally construed, CO's (which are public Police) are denied this right.

Listed below is an excerpt of the actual law addressing compulsory arbitration:

**COMPULSORY ARBITRATION OF LABOR DISPUTES IN POLICE AND FIRE DEPARTMENTS
(EXCERPT)
Act 312 of 1969**

423.231 Compulsory arbitration in police and fire departments; policy.

Sec. 1.

It is the public policy of this state that in public police and fire departments, where the right of employees to strike is by law prohibited, it is requisite to the high morale of such employees and the efficient operation of such departments to afford an alternate, expeditious, effective and binding procedure for the resolution of disputes, and to that end the provisions of this act, providing for compulsory arbitration, shall be liberally construed.

423.232 "Public police and fire departments," "emergency medical service personnel," and "emergency telephone operator" defined; provisions inapplicable to certain persons.

Sec. 2.

(1) Public police and fire departments means any department of a city, county, village, or township having employees engaged as policemen, or in fire fighting or subject to the hazards thereof, emergency medical service personnel employed by a police or fire department, or an emergency telephone operator employed by a police or fire department.

The most recent negotiated contract between MSEA (Safety and Regulatory Unit) and the State of Michigan was voted down by the Safety and Regulatory Unit members, which sent the negotiations to an impasse panel. The impasse panel heard arguments from both sides and made certain recommendation to the state. The State denied all recommendations by the impasse panel and the Safety and Regulatory Unit was literally stuck with the same contract that was voted down. Compulsory Arbitration, in this case, would have forced an independent third party to hear all arguments and make a legally binding decision.

CO's **deserve** the right for compulsory arbitration just as every other Police Officer in this state.

MDNR CONSERVATION OFFICER COMPARABLES IN MICHIGAN

The law enforcement occupation of a MDNR CO is very unique; nevertheless, CO's are public Police and should be compared with other comparable law enforcement agencies primarily within Michigan due to the equivalent economy.

So let's compare apples with apples as it pertains to wages and retirement systems.

Within the State of Michigan government, the MSP Troopers are the only comparable. Outside of state government, but within the State of Michigan, DNR LED CO's can be compared to other law enforcement agencies with similar staffing levels. The MCOA contacted MCOLES who in December, 2007, provided a list of agencies which descended by staffing levels. Based on the MCOLES report, the DNR LED ranked twelfth from the highest based on staffing levels. Listed below is a portion of the list provided by MCOLES illustrating the top 20 staffed agencies in the state.

1. Detroit Police Department	3,126 Police Officers
2. Michigan State Police	1,746 Police Officers
3. Wayne County Sheriff's Department	1,052 Police Officers
4. Oakland County Sheriff's Department	628 Police Officers
5. Grand Rapids Police Department	319 Police Officers
6. Flint Police Department	259 Police Officers
7. Macomb County Sheriff Department	252 Police Officers
8. Lansing Police Department	246 Police Officers

- 9. Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety 242 Police Officers
- 10. Kent County Sheriff Department 233 Police Officers
- 11. Warren Police Department 231 Police Officers
- 12. MDNR-Law Enforcement Division 191 Police Officers
- 13. Dearborn Police Department 190 Police Officers
- 14. Sterling Heights Police Department 171 Police Officers
- 15. Kalamazoo County Sheriff Department 162 Police Officers
- 16. Ann Arbor Police Department 151 Police Officers
- 17. Southfield Police Department 151 Police Officers
- 18. Genesee County Sheriff Department 150 Police Officers
- 19. Livonia Police Department 148 Police Officers
- 20. Washtenaw County Sheriff Department 147 Police Officers

The MCOA will utilize the ten agencies closest to MDNR LED based on staffing levels along with MSP and compare base wage scales, overtime availability, retirement system, years of service required to retire with full benefits and any employer sponsored optional investment plans offered.

Agency Name	Base Wage Min – Max W/O Promotion	O.T. Available	Retirement System	Service Time Required	Optional / Additional Investment
MDNR Law Enforcement Div.	\$29,307 - \$54,184	Minimal Varies by budget	Deferred Compensation	30	N/A
Michigan State Police Troopers	\$41,329 - \$60,798	100 hrs +/-	Defined Benefit @ 60%	25	Yes
Macomb County Sheriff Dept.	\$45,246 - \$57,745	100-200 hrs +	Defined Benefit 2.64 multiplier = 66%	25	Yes
Lansing Police Dept.	\$38,681 - \$55,622	Varies on operational needs	Defined Benefit 3.2 multiplier = 80%	25	No
**Kalamazoo Dept. Public Safety	\$42,828 - \$57,941	160 hrs a month w/ approval	Defined Contribution	26	Yes
Kent County Sheriff Dept.	\$43,825 - \$61,235	400+	Defined Benefit 2.5 multiplier = 62%	25	Yes
Warren Police Dept.	\$45,910 - \$65,368	200+	Defined Benefit @ 80%	25	Yes
**Dearborn Police Dept.	\$42,127 - \$59,538	Avg. \$10K + yr	Defined Contribution	N/A	N/A
Sterling Heights Police Dept.	\$43,908 - \$74,426	100 hrs + w/approval	Defined Benefit 2.8 multiplier = 70%	25	Yes
Kalamazoo County Sheriff Dept.	\$42,016 - \$59,675	10% above top pay	Defined Contribution	25	N/A
Ann Arbor Police Dept.	\$41,017 - \$58,572	N/A	Defined Benefit 2.75 multiplier = 68%	25	Yes
**Southfield Police Dept.	\$41,032 - \$65,241	N/A	Defined Benefit 2.8 multiplier, 70% Max	20	Yes

****NOTES****

**Kalamazoo County Sheriff Department utilizes a Defined Contribution Pension Plan owned by their union where the employer contributes 16% of an officers gross pay into a Trust type investment plan. Upon retirement, the officer has the option to remove their investment or allow it to remain in the plan.

**Dearborn Police Department is in the process of switching back to Defined Benefit pension (MERS B4 plan = 2.5 multiplier = 62%) due to expense of Defined Contribution plan. Dearborn officials indicated to many new officers

leave their department because of the poor retirement system and the costs are too great with losing so many officers.

**Southfield Police Department figures are based on an expired 2006 contract. Wages are expected to increase.

Using the above Michigan law enforcement agency comparisons, CO's are well behind the acceptable norm. Calculating these statistics reveals the following:

The CO's starting base wage is \$12,022 or 29% less than MSP Troopers starting wage.

The CO's maximum base wage is \$6,614 or 11% less than MSP Troopers maximum wage.

The average starting base wage for the ten comparables equates to \$46,762. The CO's starting base wage is \$17,455 or 37% less than the ten comparable agencies.

The average maximum base wage for the ten comparables equates to \$61,536. The CO's maximum base wage is \$7,352 or 12% less than the ten comparable agencies.

Virtually all comparable agencies starting and maximum wage, is significantly higher, even more so than illustrated due to overtime availability and other financial incentives that CO's do not receive. Dearborn Police are switching back to a Defined Benefit and Kalamazoo County Sheriff Deputies own their retirement system and the employer contributes significantly more. All comparables require 20-26 years of service with 25 years of service as the acceptable norm. In addition to the Defined Benefit pensions, many agencies offer optional investment plans.

The most sought after candidates entering into the law enforcement occupation are much more financially responsible than ever before. These statistics illustrate that the LED can not compete with similar Michigan law enforcement agencies for the highly qualified candidates.

GREAT LAKES STATES COMPARISONS

The following chart compares the five natural resource law enforcement agencies that border Michigan. These are the closest and most accurate comparables available as it pertains to the job functions of a Michigan DNR Conservation Officer. It compares staffing levels, wages, overtime availability, retirement systems, years of service required to retire with full benefits and any optional investment plans offered.

The wage statistics may vary slightly from the national survey results found later in the document due to some agencies (including Michigan) having received incremental contractual wage increases. It was also discovered that the Wisconsin wage figures illustrated in the national survey were not accurate. Wisconsin's wage, as of April, 2008, is factually reported in the following table.

Agency Name	Number of Officers	Base Wage Min – Max W/O Promotion	O.T. Available	Retirement System	Service Time Required	Optional / Additional Investment
MDNR Law Enforcement Division	149	\$29,889 - \$55,265	Minimal Varies by budget	Deferred Compensation	30	N/A
Indiana DNR-Law Enforcement Division	190	\$36,699 - \$60,008	Approx. 50 hrs	Defined Benefit @ 62%	25	Yes
Illinois DNR-Law Enforcement Division	137	\$38,000 - \$93,000	Budget Driven	Defined Benefit @ 80%	26.8	Yes
Minnesota DNR-Law Enforcement Division	155	\$45,852 - \$59,842	400 hrs	Defined Benefit @ 3% accrued every year worked. Max at 100%	Age 55	Yes
Ohio DNR-Law Enforcement Division	120	\$34,424 - \$43,050	N/A	Defined Benefit	25	Yes
Wisconsin DNR-Law Enforcement Division	150	\$42,078 - \$60,361	400 hrs	Defined Benefit @ 85%	Age + yrs service = 75	Yes

Using the natural resource law enforcement agency comparisons from bordering great lakes states, Michigan DNR CO's are, again, well behind the acceptable norm. Calculating these statistics reveals the following:

The average starting wage for the five comparables equates to \$39,411. The Michigan CO starting base wage is \$9,522 or 24% less than the five comparable agencies.

The average maximum base wage for the five comparables equates to \$63,352. The Michigan CO maximum base wage is \$7,987 or 13% less than the five comparable agencies.

All of the comparable states natural resource law enforcement entities offer a Defined Benefit pension system to their Conservation Officers.

MICHIGAN CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION & EQUITY ISSUE

Michigan DNR Conservation Officers seem to routinely find themselves struggling for appropriate recognition by the state. In the 1980's and 1990's, CO's were engaged in recognition efforts dealing with wage "PARITY" or "EQUITY" and the pursuit of an adequate and appropriate law enforcement pension system. Both of these issues were successfully pursued, although the pension system acknowledgement was a legislative action. The wage issue was previously addressed and corrected by the Civil Service Commission.

The MCOA has researched Civil Service Commission archives pertaining to the Commissions 1980's course of action recognizing appropriate compensation for Conservation Officers.

Recovered Civil Service Commission archived documents from 1979 reveal the following:

It is the finding of the Civil Service Commission that Michigan history has proven the value of citizen analysis and guidance to the merit system (still in use today), and that such analysis and guidance, uniquely structured as to scope and specificity, is now necessary as an official undertaking of the Commission.

With this resolution, the Michigan Civil Service Commission, the policy making body for the state's merit system, expressed its interest in a fundamental systematic review of personnel management for the state's (then)65,000 employees. The Commission then took action on June 28, 1978 to create a Citizen's Advisory Task Force on Civil Service Reform.

A 15 member Citizen's Advisory Task Force was established and provided the following recommendations:

*.....the Michigan Civil Service Commission should promulgate merit principles specifically designed to meet the needs of Michigan. Those merit principles should recognize that the public service is for the benefit of the public. They should seek to assure that:....and applicants for employment and **employees are fairly and equitably treated.** The recommended principles are:*

- 1. To assure.....*
- 2. All persons.....*
- 3. **Equitable compensation should be provided for work of equal value and incentives should be provided for excellence in performance. Adequate compensation should be provided, with appropriate consideration of the relevant compensation provided by other employers.***

CO's appeared before the Civil Service Commission presenting arguments pertaining to the need for wage parity between Michigan State Police Troopers and Michigan Conservation Officers. CO's illustrated the reality and intricacies of their hazardous law enforcement occupation to the Commission as justification for wage parity. An archived minute's document from a Civil Service Commission meeting dated April 14, 1989, revealed the following under the heading of "SPECIAL ORDERS OF BUSINESS", end of paragraph #1:

.....It is my (Civil Service Commission Vice-Chair Alan A. May) recommendation that in addition to the pay package that the other state employees obtained, and for the reasons discussed, and because I feel that **equity requires it**, that fairness would include a 2 ½ % increase for the Conservation Officer I and II levels, and a \$3.00 per-diem for emergency response for the Conservation Officer I, II, and III Levels, to be effective October 1, 1989.

On motion duly made and supported, the Commission approved an additional 2 ½ % increase for the Conservation Officer I and II levels, and a \$3.00 per-diem for emergency response for the Conservation Officer I, II and III levels.

The Civil Service Commission actions brought the CO's wage scale to an equivalent of the Michigan State Police Troopers wages. However, throughout the years since this 1989 Civil Service Commission action, CO's have repeatedly fallen farther and father behind their closest state employed comparable, the MSP Troopers. Why then, despite the 15 member Citizens Advisory Task Force recommendations, have CO's continued to fall so far behind the acceptable norm for law enforcement officers wage scales and retirement systems?

The Civil Service Commission itself indicates "equity requires it". The MCOA requests the present Civil Service Commission to revisit the Conservation Officer wage discrepancies. CO's only wish to be treated and compensated equally.

MDNR CONSERVATION OFFICER RETIREMENT SYSTEM DILEMMA

In the late 1980's, Michigan Conservation Officers worked hard in Lansing, and throughout the state, to educate the Legislature on the depth and intricacies of their occupation. The purpose of these efforts, in part, was to gain economic parity (specifically in the area of retirement) with the only other group of state employees that have similar authority and jurisdiction: Michigan State Police Troopers. The legislature concurred with the Conservation Officers concerns and passed legislation providing a 25-year Defined Benefit pension specifically for CO's that was virtually identical to what the Michigan State Police have. The Senate Bill was signed by former Governor James Blanchard and became Public Act 110 of 1990 (MCL 38.48). A portion of this law trails the end of this section.

Unfortunately, these gains lasted less than a decade. In 1996, the Michigan Legislature passed legislation that converted state employees from a Defined Benefit pension to a Deferred Compensation system. Although Conservation Officers employed at that time were able to maintain their hard won 25-year pension, CO's hired after April 1st, 1997 were automatically placed into the Deferred Compensation system. Fortunately for State Troopers, who have their own separate pension system, they were spared this retirement system change.

Conservation Officers felt blindsided because they believed that their specific Defined Benefit pension would remain secure in spite of the new law. However, because the provisions granting a 25-year pension to Conservation Officers is contained in the State Employees Retirement Act, their specific pension clause was rendered irrelevant as an unintended consequence of the broader legislation. In essence, new CO's were stripped of their well-deserved 25-year Defined Benefit pension system.

An equally great loss to Conservation Officers (and indeed all state workers) was the switch to a "graded-scale premium" for health care. Before the switch to Deferred Compensation, state employees who had 10 years of service would have 90% of their health care premiums paid by the state upon their retirement. Under the graded-scale premium, state employees hired after April 1, 1997 instead receive 3% per year of service. This means that in order to reach the equivalent benefit enjoyed by employees under the old system, an individual must obtain 30 years of service (30 x 3% = 90%).

While this has been a blow to all state employees, it has been particularly devastating to Conservation Officers. Even if a CO were able to amass enough funds to retire after 25 years under the Deferred Compensation system, their health care costs would be significantly higher if they do not work the entire 30 years. The bottom line is that the switch from Defined Benefit to Deferred Compensation has made a 25-year retirement all but impossible for Conservation Officers.

There are numerous reasons why a 25-year pension for Conservation Officers is so important. Perhaps the most vital reason centers on the very physically demanding and stressful nature of the job. How many other state employees begin their shift by donning ballistic resistant vests and deal with – in high frequency and in uncontrolled environments – unpredictable individuals armed with firearms and other weapons while in some of the most remote areas of the state? It is unreasonable to demand any individual to continue to perform at a high physical and mental level into his or her 50's and 60's. This is why the vast majority of public safety officers (police and fire fighters) across Michigan have a 25-year pension system.

The very fact that Conservation Officers are the minority law enforcement officers in Michigan who do not have a 25-year pension is another reason they need one. Recruiting for new Conservation Officers has been dreadful in recent years. The most promising candidates are looking elsewhere to enjoy a law enforcement career once they discover that Conservation Officers do not have a 25-year pension plan. The DNR-LED has consistently failed to meet its recruiting goals for Conservation Officers over the past several years and it continues to worsen. This has resulted in historic low staffing levels and an even more stressful working environment for Conservation Officers statewide.

It is good public policy for government entities to provide adequate and secure pension systems to their police and fire personnel due to the hazardous nature of their occupations. Having retirement parity, or near parity, with comparable Michigan law enforcement agencies will at the very least improve recruitment of new CO's which currently continues to suffer.

MDNR CO's are unique in the scope and breadth of their duties. They are tasked with upholding state laws in challenging environments and often without backup or support. The demands placed on Conservation Officers are deserving of their previously awarded 25-year Defined Benefit pension system based on the responsibilities, services, safety, security and protection they have provided to the residents of the State of Michigan for over 120 years. They have earned it!

STATE EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT ACT (EXCERPT)
Act 240 of 1943
38.48 Conservation Officers.

Sec. 48.

(1) A member who is a conservation officer may retire under this section if all of the following requirements are met:

(a) The member is a conservation officer on April 1, 1991.

(b) The member has 25 or more years of credited service, of which 20 years of credited service are as a conservation officer and of which the last 2 years of credited service are as a conservation officer.

(2) A member who is a conservation officer may retire under this section if the member has 25 or more years of credited service, of which 23 years of credited service are as a conservation officer and of which the last 2 years of credited service are as a conservation officer.

(3) A member may retire under subsection (1) or (2) upon written application to the retirement board stating a date upon which he or she desires to retire. Beginning on the retirement allowance effective date, he or she shall receive a retirement allowance equal to 60% of the member's annual compensation for the member's most highly compensated 24 consecutive months of service as a conservation officer. The formula for calculating a member's retirement allowance under this subsection shall never exceed the formula for calculating a retirement allowance under section 24 of the state police retirement act of 1986, 1986 PA 182, MCL 38.1624.

MCOA RETIREMENT PROPOSALS & RECOMENDATIONS

The current Deferred Compensation retirement system is not adequate to provide financial security upon retirement nor does it equal the retirement plans offered by other law enforcement agencies of similar size or even smaller agencies. The Deferred Compensation system hinders LED from attracting the best recruits to fill the vacancies. CO's deserve a pension-based retirement system **equal** to other comparable law enforcement agencies, which provides financial security upon retirement. The MCOA has provided several recommendations that are all based on comparables from similar Michigan law enforcement agencies and the pensions systems they offer. All recommendations would, at minimum, partially alleviate recruitment concerns due to an attractive pension proposal that would directly invite experienced law enforcement officers, which is apparently the audience that LED hiring practices are now rumored to target. The significant pension feature that will attract experienced certified law enforcement officers is a credit that would be received from prior employment with other law enforcement agencies. All pension-based recommendations would include the current 90% medical benefits coverage upon fulfillment of pension eligibility. Reduce the service time required down to 25 years in order to be eligible for the 90% medical benefits coverage (equates to 3.6% multiplier for each year of service).

The MCOA first and most sought after recommendation would be to simply restore the previously awarded 25 year Defined Benefit pension system as it exists specifically for CO's. More than half of the currently employed CO's are still in this pension system. Allow a maximum of up to 5 years of prior employment with any other law enforcement agency to apply towards a CO's retirement eligibility or towards an increase of 2% for each year of prior service (5 years = 10% increase in final pension percentage). Restoration of the CO 25 year Defined Benefit pension system will place CO's back towards a level playing field with other similar Michigan law enforcement agencies.

The MCOA second recommendation would be to create a multiplier based pension. This, in short, is done by utilizing an annual multiplier of no less than 2.4% for each year of service allowing retirement eligibility after 25 years of service with no age requirement. This would provide a CO, after 25 years of service, to receive 60% (25 yrs X 2.4% = 60%) of their pay and can not exceed 75% no matter how many years of service they choose maintain employment. Allow a maximum of up to 5 years of prior employment with any other law enforcement agency to apply towards a CO's retirement eligibility or towards an increase of 2% for each year of prior service (serve 20 years and retire at 60% or 5 years of prior law enforcement employment = 10% increase in final pension percentage after 25 years). This multiplier option would better provide for a more youthful, productive and cost efficient CO workforce. Pension systems using multipliers are very common with other law enforcement agencies, however, many use higher annual multipliers.

The MCOA third recommendation would be to provide a rule of 75 (point system) pension. This rule equates to a CO's years of service + the CO's age which must then = 75. As an example, if a CO is employed at the age of 25 and they serve 25 years, they would be 50 years old. Their age (50) plus their years of service (25) would equal 75. Once the rule of 75 is attained by a CO, they would qualify for 60% of their wage as their pension. All years of service past 25 years would increase the final pension compensation by 2.4% every year and can not exceed 75% no matter how many years of service they choose maintain employment. Allow a maximum of up to 5 years of prior employment with any other law enforcement agency to apply towards a CO's retirement eligibility or towards an increase of 2% for each year of prior service (serve 20 years and retire at 60% or 5 years of prior law enforcement employment = 10% increase in final pension percentage).

The final recommendation is to offer the CO a **choice** of systems. The CO would be able to choose between any of the above recommended Defined Benefit pension-based systems or a **significantly modified** Deferred Compensation system where;

1. The employer provides an appropriate financial contribution into the investment plan of the CO's choice for every year of service they have been required to participate in the plan since the year of inception, 1997.
2. The employer's mandatory contribution percentage is significantly increased.

3. The CO is able to choose which plan (401 or 457) all future mandatory and matching contributions are deposited into.
4. The employers matching fund percentage (in the CO's plan of choice) is significantly increased.
5. The employer reduces the amount of service time required down to 25 years in order to be eligible for the 90% medical benefits coverage (equates to 3.6% each year).
6. Allow a maximum of up to 5 years of prior employment with any other law enforcement agency to apply towards a CO's retirement eligibility or towards an increase of 2% in medical benefits coverage for each year of prior service (serve 20 years and retire at 90% medical benefits coverage or 5 years of prior law enforcement employment = 10% increase in medical benefits coverage).

The MCOA is conscious of the future funding inadequacies as it pertains to the Game & Fish Protection Fund. The MCOA requests that the legislature and the Natural Resource Commission (NRC) take into consideration the shortfalls of the Conservation Officer retirement system when providing a resolution.

There have been suggestions for a significant funding source for CO pensions. Conservation fees are assessed to every Fish & Game violation as mandated by law. The conservation fee (legally known as the Judgment fee) is presently \$10 per violation, which is a rather low monetary assessment. (Applicable MCL provided).

324.1609 Judgment fee.

In all prosecutions for violation of the law for the protection of game and fish, the sentencing court shall assess, as costs, the sum of \$10.00, to be known as the judgment fee. When collected, the judgment fee shall be paid into the state treasury to the credit of the game and fish protection account of the Michigan conservation and recreation legacy fund provided for in section 2010.

The proposal would be to broaden the enforcement activities in which the conservation fees are required, additionally applying them to marine, ORV, and snowmobile violations and increase the conservation fee appropriately. Once a violator has been convicted, the increased conservation fee assessment (at least a portion of it) would be directed to the funding of CO pensions. Currently, this type of pension funding source is commonly utilized by several other states. This funding source would also relieve the State of Michigan, to a degree, over funding concerns dealing with the CO pension system. This funding source suggestion also targets those who choose to violate the law rather than placing the entire financial burden on the Michigan population.

As an example of the potential funding revenues, the following is provided. According to LED statistics, in the year 2006, CO's issued a total of 14,130 citations statewide. If an additional \$30 were assessed to each 2006 citation, that would equate to \$423,900 in potential funding for one year. The constantly decreasing staffing levels of CO's in the field has resulted in a decline in the overall numbers of citations being issued. In 2007, CO's issued approximately 12,000 citations (final number not yet confirmed). If \$30 were assessed to each 2007 citation, that would equate to \$360,000 in potential funding. While this funding source, at a hypothetical \$30 additional assessment, does not entirely fund a pension system, it would certainly provide substantial annual revenue at the expense of those who choose to violate the law.

CONCLUSION

The MCOA, along with each and every CO, is very well aware of the dire fiscal situation of the state and the projected financial shortfalls in the Game and Fish Protection Fund. CO's have done over the last several years to help remedy the financial crisis starting with the loss of the 25 year pension back in 1997 and by way of overall income reductions.

CO's only wish to be treated and compensated with equity leveling the professional law enforcement playing field. CO's are not asking for anything more than what other, comparable, law enforcement agencies possess. This entails equitable wages, ability to fairly negotiate contracts (Compulsory Arbitration), to re-secure (or have the choice of) a 25 year Defined Benefit pension system and the unwavering support of high level administration.

CO's, as indicated earlier, are a very unique class of Police Officer, different from all others. They conduct their duties and responsibilities very seriously and with the uppermost levels of professionalism. CO's perform their functions out of genuine concern and a sincere desire to protect Michigan's natural resources and to serve the people of the great State of Michigan.

MDNR CONSERVATION OFFICERS NEED YOUR SUPPORT

The MDNR Conservation Officer occupation is demanding and hazardous. As such, MCOA is asking for the recognition of those they serve.

Despite the budgetary issues, the recreational activities that outdoor enthusiasts enjoy and depend on deserve the most professional law enforcement officers and agency to protect their interests. Michigan Conservation Officers have taken an oath to protect the citizens, property and natural resources of this state and take great pride in the job in which they do. However, CO's are seeing change in the recruitment and retention of newer Conservation Officers due to inadequacies dealing directly with pay, retirement system, and the lack to fairly negotiate contracts. MCOA only wants the best qualified applicants to become Michigan Conservation Officers. However, it has become difficult recruiting highly qualified candidates who could work 25 years for, as an example, the MSP and after their 25 years of service, have the security of a retirement pension income.

Additionally, MCOA fears that natural resources in this state will not be adequately protected do to perceived budgetary shortfalls. For example, as of January, 2008, there were a total of 81 position vacancies between all divisions combined within the DNR. LED, one of the many divisions within the DNR, made up more than half of the 81 vacancies, totaling 43 vacant Conservation Officer positions. Additionally, the DNR threatened to layoff 14 more Conservation Officers due to perceived budget shortfalls in 2007/2008. The threat of layoffs to these officers began in approximately the beginning of October, 2007. In reality there was not a funding issue and all DNR Conservation Officer positions were fully funded through the 2007/2008 fiscal year. At the January 10, 2008 Natural Resource Commission meeting, the DNR revealed that in November 2007 they had projected a 7.8 million dollar surplus in the fish and game fund. At the same meeting, the DNR also revealed they closed the November 2007 "books" with a \$10 million dollar surplus. Yet the threat of CO layoffs continued until December 10, 2007. With LED possessing the necessary funds, why would the threat of CO staffing levels be compromised further?

Other decisions have also been made which could ultimately compromise your natural resources. In late 2007, the Michigan legislature failed to produce a state budget and state officials prepared for a government shutdown on October 1st. The Governor ordered each department head to determine what, if any, occupation or employment would be considered an "ESSENTIAL SERVICE" in state government. Only those designated as an essential service would continue to work on a limited basis. There were small numbers of personnel from Fisheries and Forest Management Divisions authorized to work during the shutdown, but no CO's were able to go to work despite the busy hunting seasons. The DNR determined that CO's were not an "ESSENTIAL SERVICE" and not one CO was allowed to work (statewide) during the government shutdown. CO's were ordered not to work, not to respond to any complaints, and they could not even donate their time (as many were willing). This scenario posed a very significant threat against Michigan's natural resources and public safety. MDNR CO's were very concerned because they police serious law violators during this same time of the year. LED also possesses essential equipment needs which are depended on by other agencies in search and rescue efforts. Fortunately, the government shutdown lasted only a few hours and CO's were able to return to work protecting the citizens, and natural resources of this State.

MCOA is asking for your recognition and support. CO's only wish to be treated fairly just as every other comparable Police Officer. CO's do not believe it is so unreasonable to be covered with equitable salaries, a 25

year Defined Benefit pension system, the right to exercise compulsory arbitration and a competitive benefit package. These are all issues directly affecting CO's recruitment, retention and morale.

As of February, 2008, the position of a DNR Conservation Officer is currently being re-examined by the Michigan State Police-Behavioral Science Unit and the MDNR Human Resources Division. The re-examination results are expected at anytime.

The natural resources within Michigan belong to the citizens of this state empowering each citizen with a vested interest in resource protection.

How important is the protection of Michigan's natural resources to you? Do you want the best candidates available watching over your interests?

The Michigan Natural Resources Commission (NRC) is a seven-member public body whose members are appointed by the Governor and subject to the advice and consent of the Senate. The Commission conducts monthly, public meetings in locations throughout Michigan. Citizens are encouraged to become actively involved in these public forums. The Commission establishes general policies for the Department of Natural Resources and hires the department's Director.

The MCOA is asking the readers of this document to get involved and support your DNR Conservation Officer's. Contact your Michigan government officials, legislators, and support groups and make your opinions heard.

Telephone listings:

Michigan Governors Office 1-517-373-3400

Michigan Lt. Governors Office 1-517-373-6800

Michigan DNR Directors Office 1-517-335-4873

Michigan Senators 1-517-373-2400 (Call this number to find out who your state Senator is)

Michigan House of Representatives 1-517-373-6339 (Call this number to find out who your Rep. is)

Michigan Department of Civil Service Director & Civil Service Commission 1-517-373-3030

Michigan DNR-LED Headquarters 1-517-373-1230

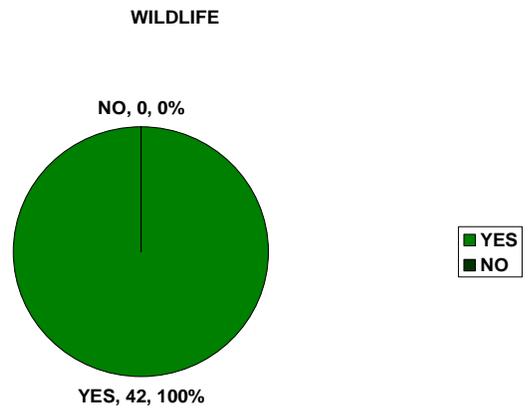
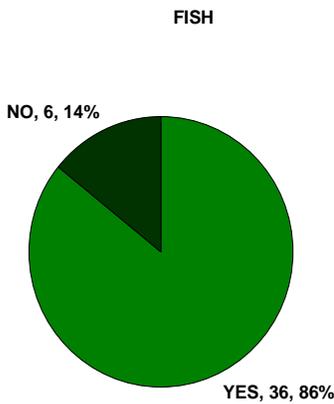
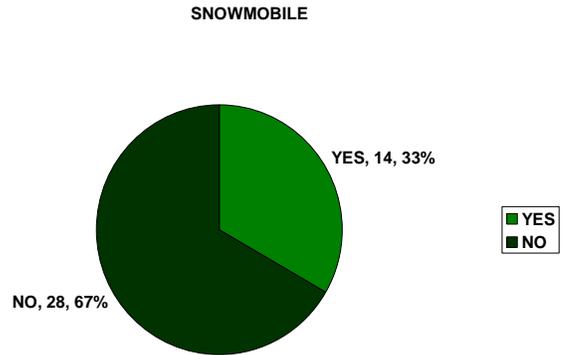
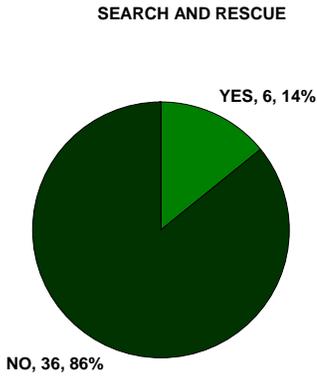
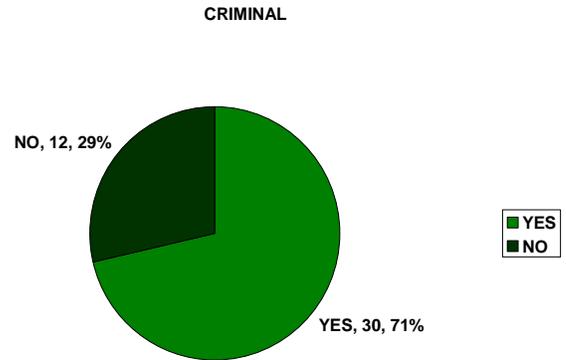
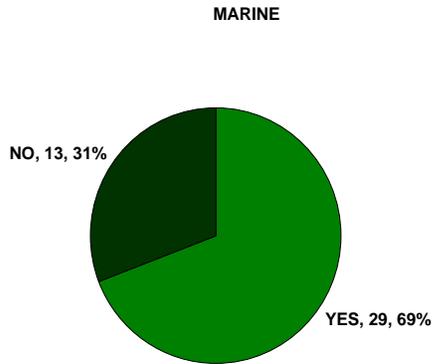
The MCOA, as well as your local DNR Conservation Officer(s), thanks you for reviewing this rather lengthy informational document. Your concern is sincerely appreciated and your support is most certainly welcomed.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF AMERICAN GAME WARDENS SURVEY

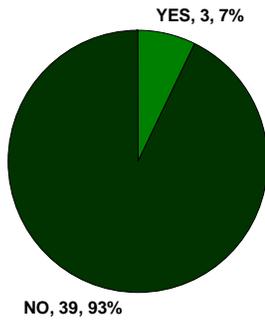
The MCOA drafted a list of 20 questions and sent the questioner to every states conservation enforcement agency. All but five states, (Arkansas, Hawaii, Maryland, Massachusetts, and Mississippi) responded.

Listed hereafter, are the twenty questions that were posed to each states Conservation enforcement agency and summary of their responses immediately follow.

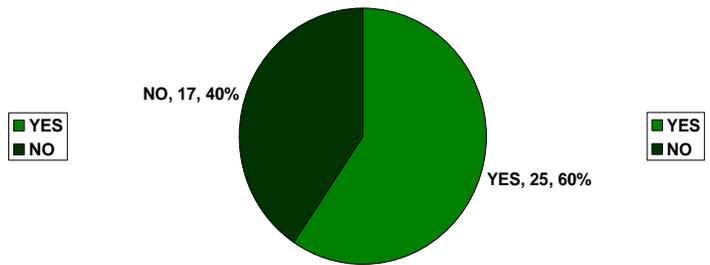
1. What are your law enforcement responsibilities (criminal, fish & game, marine, ORV, snowmobile, etc...)?



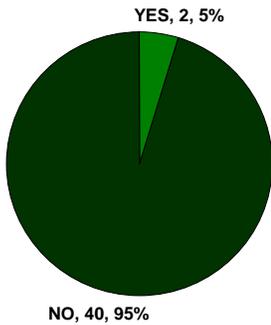
EDUCATION



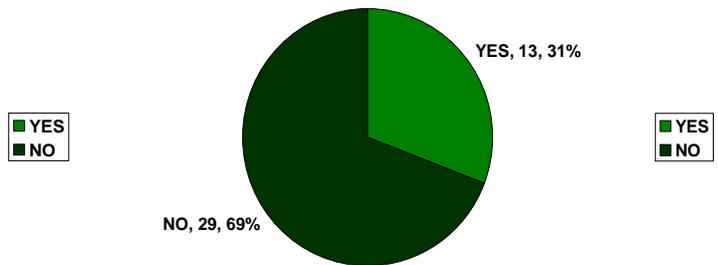
ORV



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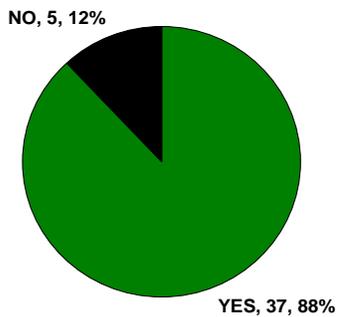


ENVIRONMENTAL

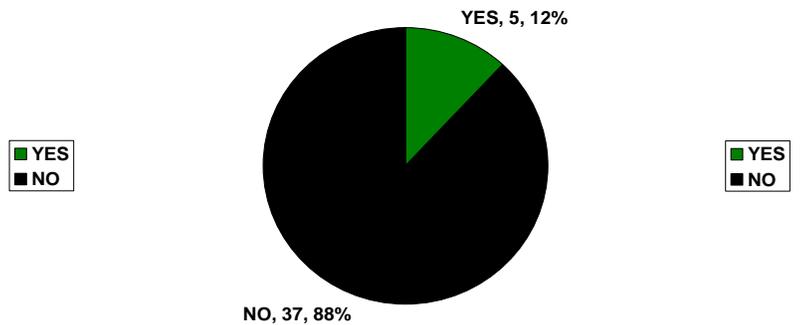


2. What is your agencies/officers enforcement authority (i.e.. fully empowered peace officers, any off duty authority, enforceability of only specific laws, all state laws)?

FULL POWERS



RESTRICTED POWERS



3. Please provide the approximate number of front line law enforcement officers in your agency to exclude supervision. *(Answers provided in results after question # 4).*
4. Please provide the last census population figure for your state. *This will reflect officer : resident ratios.*

STATE	CENSUS POPULATION	# FRONT LINE OFFICERS	1 OFFICER TO STATE RESIDENTS RATIO
<u>Alabama</u>	4,500,000	136	1 : 29,411
<u>Alaska</u>	670,053	80	1 : 8,375
<u>Arizona</u>	5,130,632	74	1 : 69,332
<u>Arkansas</u>	N/A	N/A	N/A
<u>California</u>	36,457,549	200	1 : 182,287
<u>Colorado</u>	4,718,554	135	1 : 34,952
<u>Connecticut</u>	2,300,000	42	1 : 54,761
<u>Delaware</u>	771,000	23	1 : 33,521
<u>Florida</u>	18,089,888	541	1 : 33,437
<u>Georgia</u>	9,300,000	206	1 : 45,145
<u>Hawaii</u>	N/A	N/A	N/A
<u>Idaho</u>	1,400,000	78	1 : 17,948
<u>Illinois</u>	12,419,293	137	1 : 90,651
<u>Indiana</u>	6,300,000	190	1 : 33,157
<u>Iowa</u>	2,982,085	87	1 : 34,276
<u>Kansas</u>	2,764,075	62	1 : 44,581
<u>Kentucky</u>	4,200,000	80	1 : 52,500
<u>Louisiana</u>	4,200,000	220	1 : 19,090
<u>Maine</u>	1,275,000	95	1 : 13,421
<u>Maryland</u>	N/A	N/A	N/A
<u>Massachusetts</u>	N/A	N/A	N/A
<u>Michigan</u>	10,071,822	149	1 : 67,596
<u>Minnesota</u>	5,167,101	155	1 : 33,336
<u>Mississippi</u>	N/A	N/A	N/A
<u>Missouri</u>	5,842,713	167	1 : 34,986
<u>Montana</u>	900,000	74	1 : 12,162
<u>Nebraska</u>	1,711,000	46	1 : 37,195
<u>Nevada</u>	2,495,529	30	1 : 83,184
<u>New Hampshire</u>	1,400,000	32	1 : 43,750
<u>New Jersey</u>	8,724,560	36	1 : 242,348
<u>New Mexico</u>	1,950,000	60	1 : 32,500
<u>New York</u>	19,306,183	225	1 : 85,805
<u>North Carolina</u>	8,856,505	141	1 : 62,812
<u>North Dakota</u>	640,000	30	1 : 21,333
<u>Ohio</u>	11,478,000	120	1 : 95,650
<u>Oklahoma</u>	3,700,758	89	1 : 41,581
<u>Oregon</u>	3,700,758	100	1 : 37,007
<u>Pennsylvania</u>	12,500,000	78	1 : 160,256
<u>Rhode Island</u>	1,000,000	23	1 : 43,478
<u>South Carolina</u>	4,321,249	222	1 : 19,465
<u>South Dakota</u>	782,000	56	1 : 13,964
<u>Tennessee</u>	6,038,803	148	1 : 40,802
<u>Texas</u>	23,507,783	440	1 : 53,426
<u>Utah</u>	2,100,000	47	1 : 44,680
<u>Vermont</u>	600,000	35	1 : 17,142
<u>Virginia</u>	7,642,884	111	1 : 68,854
<u>Washington</u>	6,395,798	120	1 : 53,298
<u>West Virginia</u>	1,800,000	100	1 : 18,000
<u>Wisconsin</u>	5,600,000	150	1 : 37,333
<u>Wyoming</u>	475,000	65	1 : 7,307

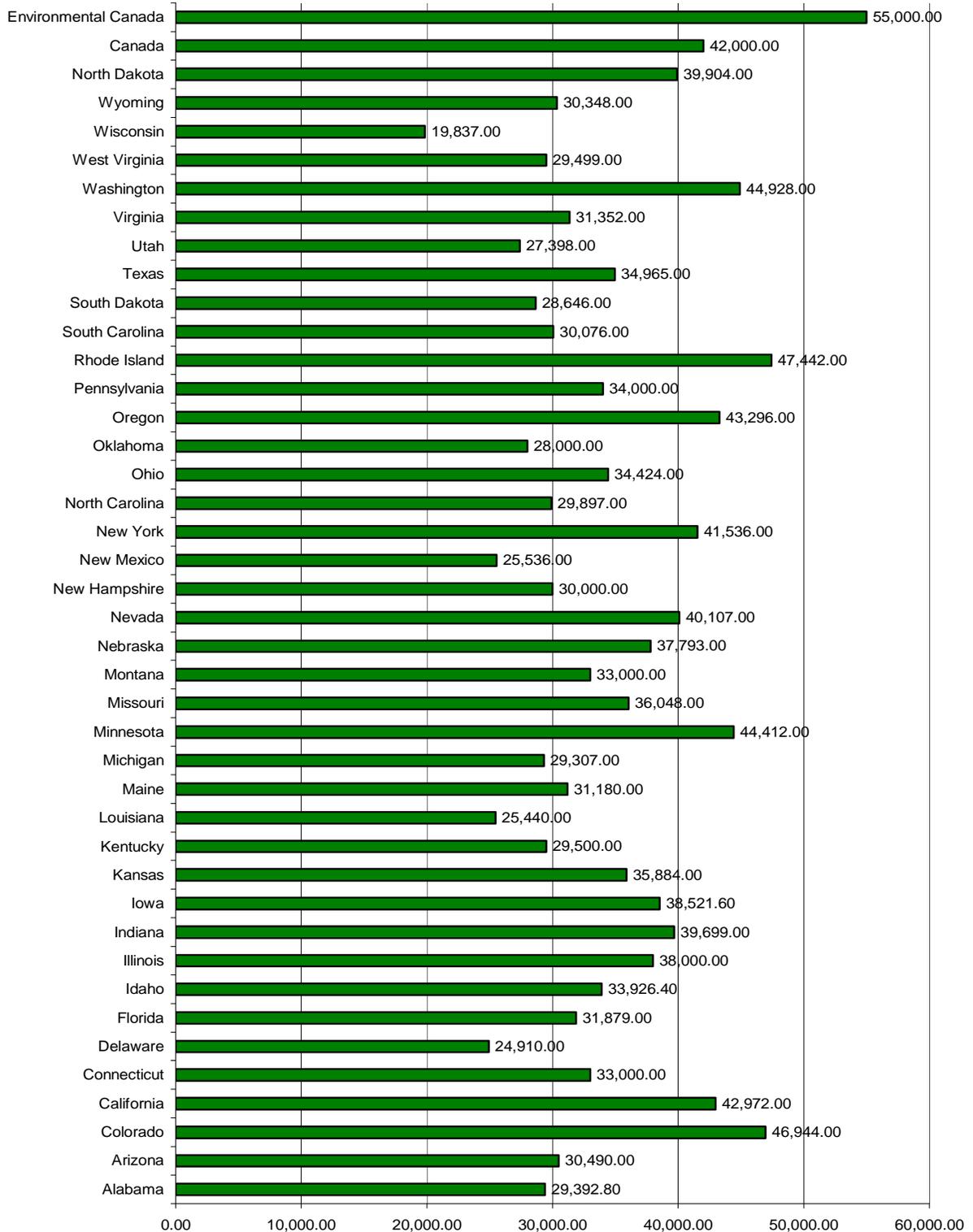
5. Does your agency have any difficulty in recruiting officers?
6. If yes to question # 5, have you identified the reason(s) and what are they?
7. Has your agency identified key recruiting incentives that attract and retain highly qualified candidates? If yes, what are they?

YES to # 5	REASONS WHY # 6	RECRUITING INCENTIVES # 7	NO to # 5	RECRUITING INCENTIVES # 7
Alaska	Low pay	Poss. \$ credit for prior LE	Alabama	N/A
Arizona	4 yr college requirement & High standards	Web Page recruitment	Connecticut	N/A
California	Low pay / Unknown occupation	N/A	Illinois	N/A
Colorado	Reasons not identified	Reside in Colorado	Indiana	Good pay
Delaware	Fewer less qualified applicants	N/A	Iowa	Good pay & benefits
Florida	Inadequate wage	Target prior law enforcement	Kansas	N/A
Georgia	Low pay / Few promotional opportunities	Lenient residency requirements	Minnesota	
Idaho	Low pay	Recruit at colleges	North Dakota	N/A
Kentucky	Pay not competitive & unfamiliar occupation	5% for previous LE	Ohio	N/A
Louisiana	Few qualified applicants	N/A	Oklahoma	N/A
Maine	N/A	N/A	Texas	N/A
Missouri	N/A	N/A		
Montana	Low pay, less interest in outdoors, LE does not draw youth	Improving pay, Lenient residency requirements		
Nebraska	Pay & schedule issues, limited advancement	N/A		
Nevada	Compete w/ other LE agencies, lack of interest in LE			
New Hampshire	Pay & lack of interest in outdoors	N/A		
New Jersey	Need 4yr college + 1yr in LE	N/A		
New Mexico	Low pay, LE jobs not popular	N/A		
New York	Live-in 6 mo academy + mandatory assignment in NYC	Trying to improve pay & benefits		
North Carolina	Few qualified applicants, compete w/other LE	Recruitment advertising		
Oregon	Pay, benefits, job stability, length of hiring process	Pay, benefits, job stability, streamline hiring process		
Pennsylvania	Shrinking applicant pool, competition w/LE agencies, low pay	N/A		
Rhode Island	N/A	N/A		
South Carolina	Difficulty recruiting minorities & educational requirements	Recruit @ colleges, target minorities		
South Dakota	Shrinking qualified applicants, competition w/LE agencies	N/A		
Tennessee	Difficulty recruiting minorities due to educational requirements	N/A		

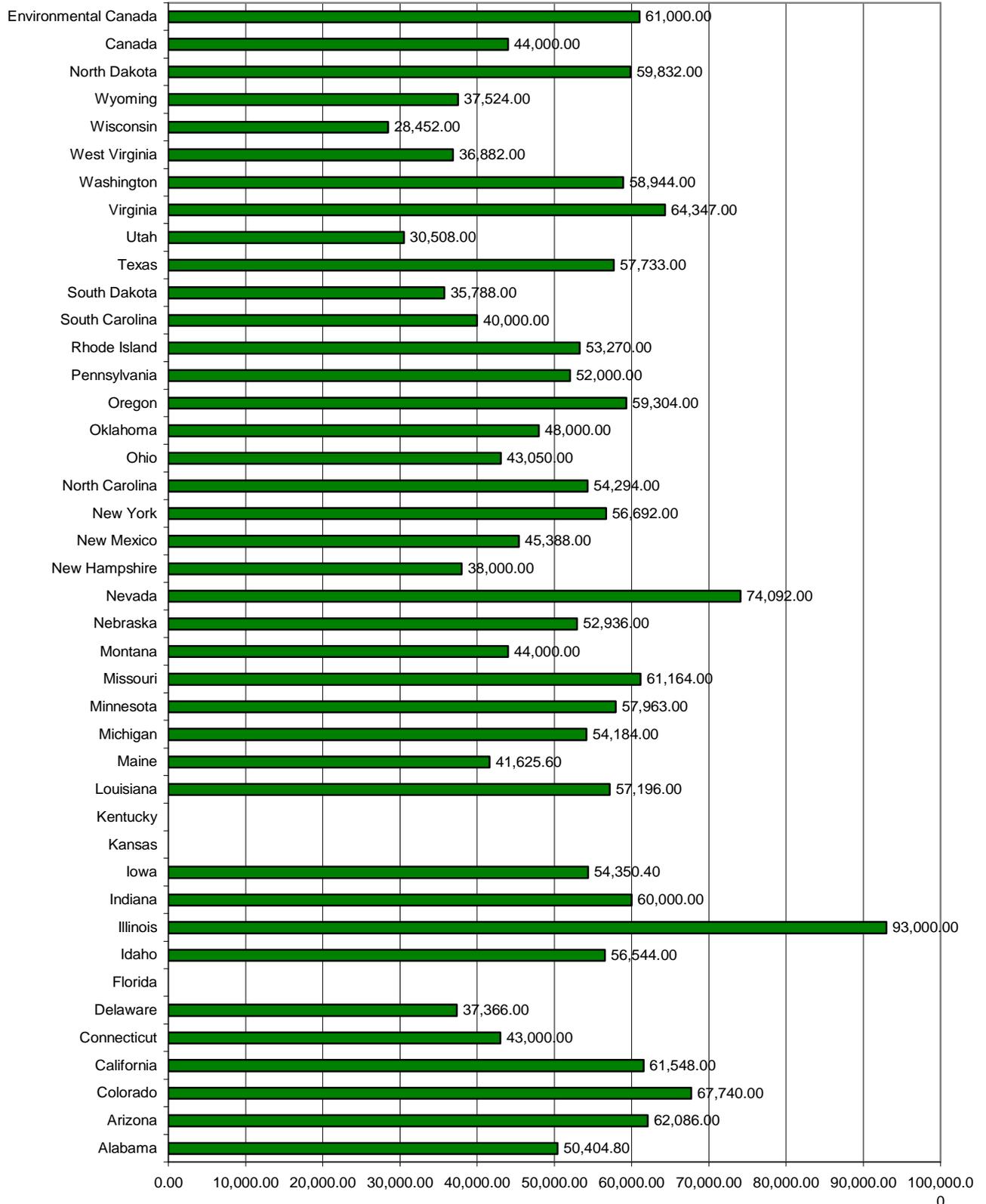
YES to # 5	REASONS WHY # 6	RECRUITING INCENTIVES # 7
Utah	Low pay for educational requirements	N/A
Vermont	Drop in applicants	Equal pay & benefits w/ State Police, Military recruitment
Virginia	Pay & occupational demands, competitive LE market	Competitive pay, home county assignments
Washington	Hiring process filters out less desired applicants	N/A
West Virginia	Few qualified applicants & pay	N/A
Wisconsin	Low pay, schedule, less interest in outdoors	N/A
Wyoming	Pay & Benefits, not recruiting in correct colleges	Offer application & exam @ colleges across country

8. Please provide your field officer base wage scale (min-max) without promotion/OT.

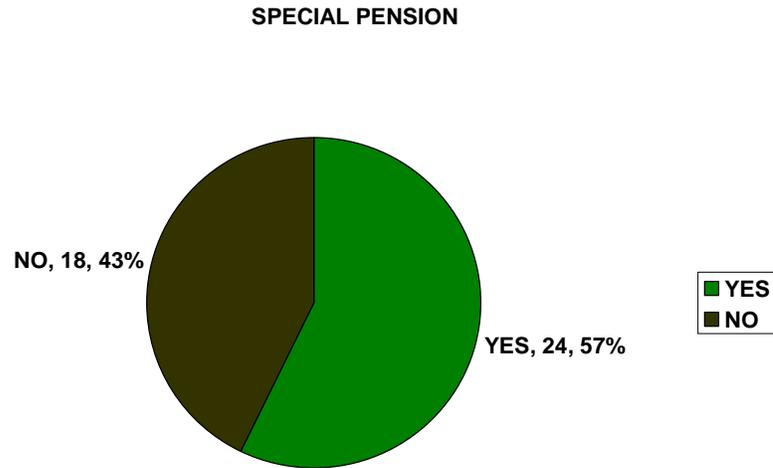
BASE WAGE MINIMUM



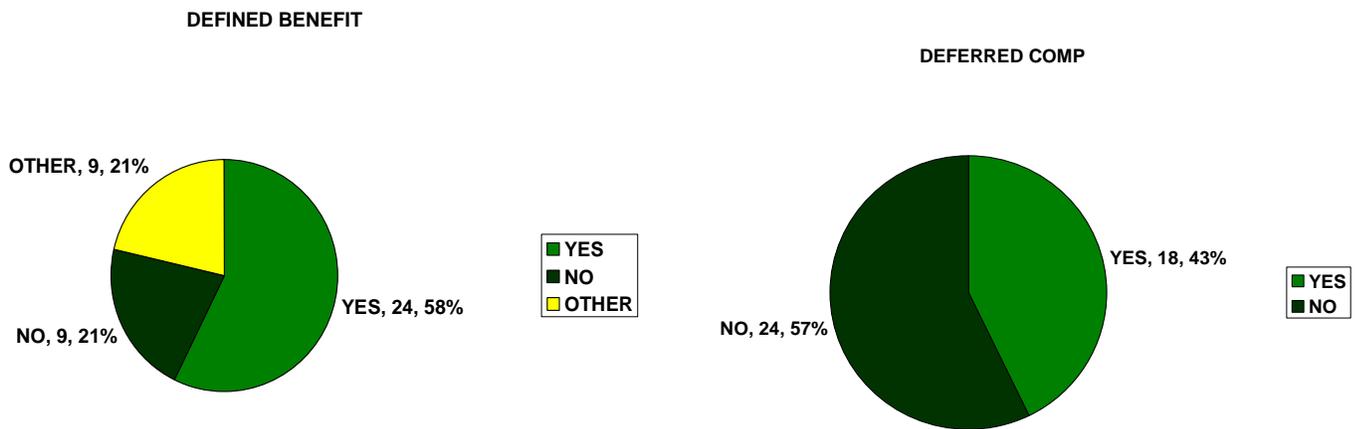
BASE WAGE MAXIMUM



9. Does your state provide a specific pension/retirement system for state law enforcement officers separate from all other state employees?



10. What type of retirement system does your agency offer (Defined Benefit pension, Deferred Compensation, other)?

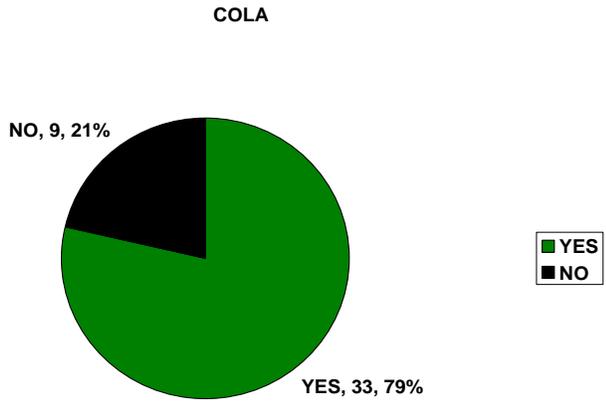


11. What amount of service time is required (in years) to receive full retirement benefit(s) (not to just be vested)?

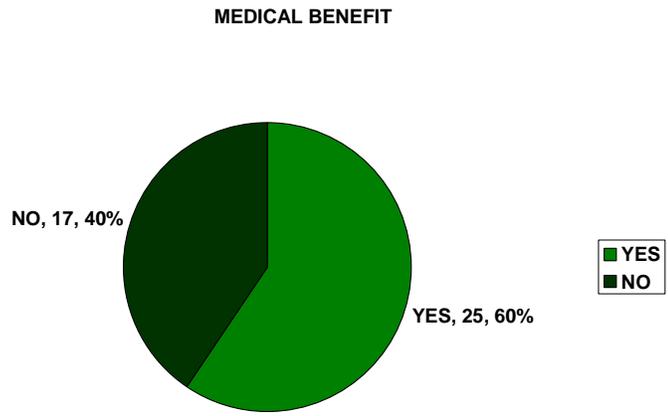
These results are summarized by the number of agencies under the applicable time requirement or system.

<u>20 years</u>	<u>22 years</u>	<u>25 years</u>	<u>26 years</u>	<u>26.8 years</u>	<u>28 years</u>	<u>30 years</u>
7	1	15	1	1	1	5
<u>Point system (age + yrs of service)</u>					<u>Other</u>	
9					5	

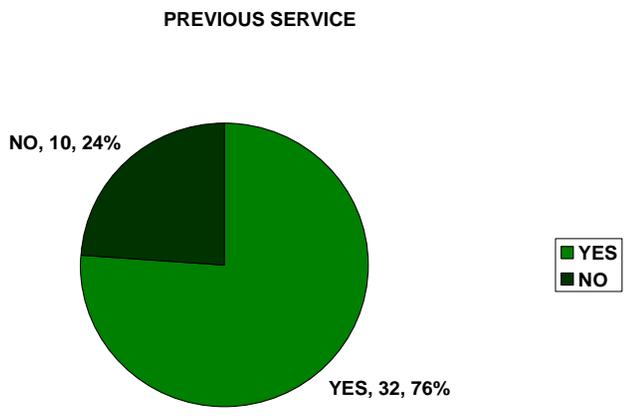
12. Does your retirement system provide C.O.L.A. (Cost Of Living Adjustment) or other rate of inflation increase to your retire income after retirement?



13. Does your retirement benefit package include medical benefits immediately upon retirement?

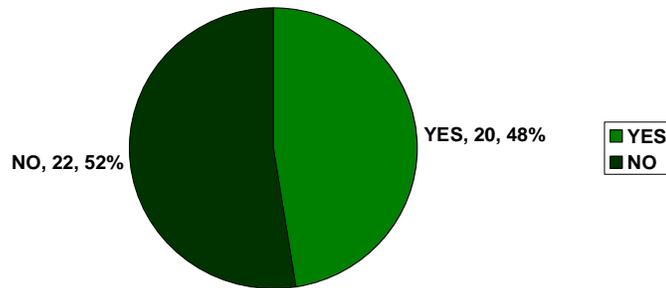


14. Does your agency recognize previous governmental service time (City, Township, County, State or Federal), other than military in any way? If yes, how (towards retirement eligibility, seniority, etc...)?



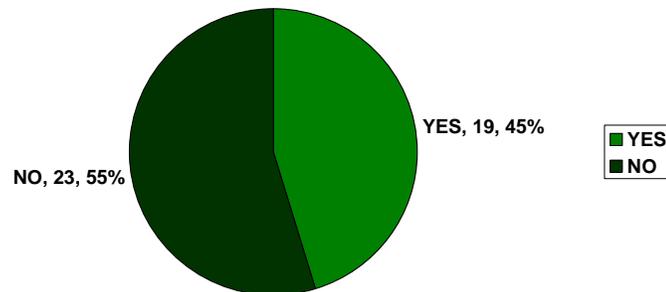
15. If yes to question # 14, does the time have to be purchased by the employee?

PURCHASE SERVICE



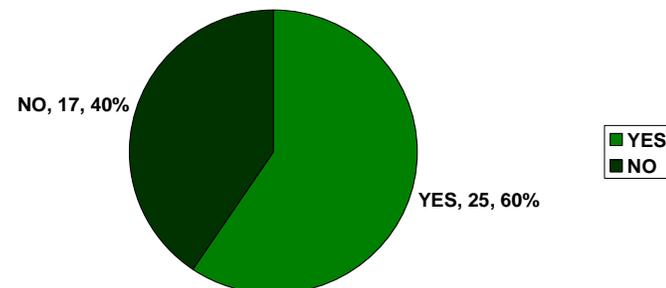
16. Do your front line law enforcement officers have collective bargaining?

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING



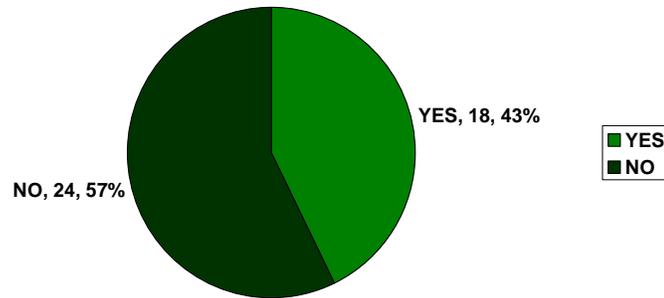
17. Does your agency provide longevity pay?

LONGEVITY



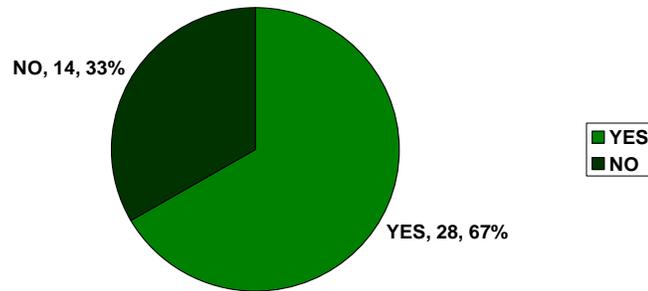
18. Do your officers get shift differential pay?

SHIFT DIFFERENTIAL



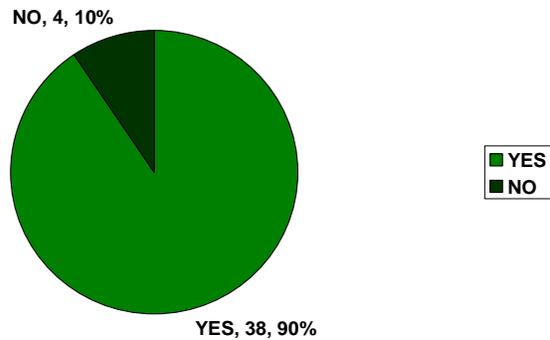
19. Does your agency, upon retirement, payout on any unused sick leave time?

SICK TIME



20. Does your agency, upon retirement, payout on any unused vacation leave time?

VACATION PAY



Detailed is a list of contacts within each states conservation law enforcement agency that participated in the national survey. The MCOA would like to thank each individual and agency that took the time to participate in the survey.

Alabama Division of Wildlife & Freshwater Fisheries

Allan Andress, Chief Enforcement Officer, 334-242-3467

Alaska Department of Public Safety, Division of Wildlife Troopers

Burke Waldron, Captain, burke.waldron@alaska.gov

Arizona Game and Fish Department-Law Enforcement Division

Russ Richins, L.E. Training Manager, richins@azgfd.gov

Arkansas Game and Fish Commission-Enforcement Division

Did not participate

California Department of Fish and Game-Law Enforcement Division

Jeff Longwell, Lieutenant in hiring/recruiting, jlongwell@dfg.ca.gov

Colorado Division of Wildlife-Law Enforcement Unit

John Hood, Training manager, john.hood@state.co.us

Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection-State Environmental Conservation Police

Tom Lewoc, Sergeant, Thomas.lewoc@po.state.ct.us

Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife-Enforcement Section

Bayard Holleger, Major, bayard.holleger@state.de.us

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission-Division of Law Enforcement

Rocky Clement, Captain, rocky.clement@myfwc.com

Georgia Department of Natural Resources-Law Enforcement Division

Mike England, Captain, mike.england@dnr.state.ga.us

Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources

Did not participate

Idaho Department of Fish and Game-Enforcement Bureau

Clay Cummins, Assistant Chief, ccummins@idfg.idaho.gov

Illinois Department of Natural Resources-Law Enforcement Division

Eric Bumgarner, Lieutenant of Enforcement Training, eric.bumgarner@illinois.gov

Indiana Department of Natural Resources-Law Enforcement Division

Kerry Griffith, Lieutenant Training Section Commander, klgriffith@dnr.in.gov

Iowa Department of Natural Resources-Bureau of Law Enforcement

Randy Edwards, Assistant Chief, randy.edwards@dnr.iowa.gov

Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks-Law Enforcement

Mark Rankin, Assistant Chief, markr@wp.state.ks.us

Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife-Division of Law Enforcement

Larry Estes, Training Coordinator, larry.estes@ky.gov

Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries-Enforcement Division

Len Yokum, Captain, lyokum@wlf.louisiana.gov

Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife-Bureau of Warden of Warden Service

Mark Warren, Training Sergeant, mark.warren@maine.gov

Maryland Natural Resources Police

Did not participate

Massachusetts Department of Fisheries, Wildlife and Environmental Law-Office of Environmental Police

Did not participate

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources-Division of Enforcement

William Spence, Major, William.spence@dnr.state.mn.us

Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks- Law Enforcement Bureau

Did not participate

Missouri Department of Fish and Wildlife Conservation-Conservation Agents

Cheryl Fey, Protection Program Supervisor, Cheryl.fey@mdc.mo.gov

Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks-Law Enforcement Division
Mike Mehn, Training Officer, mmehn@mt.gov

Nebraska Game and Parks Commission-Law Enforcement Division
Craig Stover, Assistant Administrator, craig.stover@ngpc.ne.gov

Nevada Department of Wildlife-Division of Law Enforcement
Cameron Waithman, Captain, cwaithman@ndow.org

New Hampshire Fish and Game Department-Law Enforcement Division
Bruce Bonenfant, Lieutenant, bbonenfant@wildlife.nh.us

New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife-Bureau of Law Enforcement
Timothy C. Cussen, Chief

New Mexico Department of Game and Fish-Law Enforcement Division
Bob Culp, Training Coordinator, Robert.culp@state.nm.us

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation-Division of Law Enforcement
Steven Gerould, Colonel, srgeroul@gw.dec.state.ny.us

North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission-Enforcement Division
Mitchell Kuykendall, Training Director, mitch.kuykendall@ncwildlife.org

North Dakota Game and Fish Department-Law Enforcement Division
Daryl Kleyer, Warden Supervisor, dkleyer@nd.gov

Ohio Department of Natural Resources-Division of Wildlife-Law Enforcement Section
Gregory Wade, LE Program Administrator, greg.wade@dnr.state.oh.us

Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation-Law Enforcement Division
David Deckard, Captain, ddeckard@odwc.state.ok.us

Oregon State Police-Fish and Wildlife Division
David Gifford, Lieutenant, david.gifford@state.or.us

Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission-Bureau of Law Enforcement
Jeffrey Bridi, Assistant Director, Bureau of Law Enforcement

Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management-Division of Law Enforcement
Kurt Blanchard, Deputy Chief, kurt.blanchard@dem.ri.gov

South Carolina Department of Natural Resources-Law Enforcement Division
Donnie Bobb, Lieutenant, bobbd@dnr.sc.gov

South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks-Law Enforcement Division
Shon Eide, Training Coordinator, shon.eide@state.sd.us

Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency-Law Enforcement Division
Stephen Nifong, Assistant Chief, stephen.nifong@state.tn.us

Texas Department of Parks and Wildlife-Division of Law Enforcement
Royce Wells, Recruiter, Royce.wells@tpwd.state.tx.us

Utah Division of Wildlife Resources-Law Enforcement Section
Stacey Jones, Sergeant, staceyjones@utah.gov

Vermont Department of Fish and Game-Law Enforcement Division
David LeCours, Major, dlecours@dps.state.vt.us

Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries-Law Enforcement Division
Rich Goszka, Sergeant, Richard.goszka@dgif.virginia.gov

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife-Enforcement Program
Richard Mann, Captain, mannrpm@dfw.wa.gov

West Virginia Department of Natural Resources-Law Enforcement Division
Jerry Jenkins, Lieutenant Colonel, jerryjenkins@wvdnr.gov

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources-Bureau of Law Enforcement
Darrel Waldera, Training Director, darrel.waldera@wi.gov

Wyoming Game and Fish Department-Wildlife Division Game Wardens
Mark Nelson, Game Warden, mark.nelson@wgf.state.wy.us