



June 20, 2014

MEMBER ALERT: CAMP GRAYLING DECLINES KEY EXPANSION ZONES IN RIVER COUNTRY!!!!

GRAYLING, MI – Camp Grayling **will not** pursue leases of or military use of more than 30,000 new acres of sensitive recreational and river corridor lands in Crawford and Kalkaska counties. Camp Grayling expansion maps drafted in May by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources envisioned turning over huge additional tracts of environmentally sensitive public recreation lands for infantry encampments and training.

But the top military official in Michigan now says those highly controversial expansion zones are “off the table.” Major General Gregory Vadnais, Adjutant General and Director of the Michigan Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, has informed Anglers of the Au Sable that:

- 1) Camp Grayling **will not** seek to lease Draft Expansion Zones 2, 3, and 5 as mapped and preliminarily proposed in May by the DNR. Those zones included more than 30,000 acres of state land. The zones included both sides of the Manistee River from M-72 to CCC Bridge, large tracts on both sides of the Manistee in Frederic Township near the Deward area, and a large tract near the Kellogg’s Bridge area of the North Branch of the Au Sable River.
- 2) Draft Expansion Zones 2, 3, and 5 are “off the table,” General Vadnais informed Anglers of the Au Sable. The only exception is what he described as a “small” portion of Zone 3 the military may still want to connect some existing training areas. That parcel may be further detailed at a later point. Anglers of the Au Sable believes this parcel will only be pursued after further discussion with and input from local stakeholders.
- 3) General Vadnais told us he made the decision not to pursue Draft Expansion Zones 2, 3, and 5 after receiving a detailed letter of concern, dated June 9, from Anglers of the Au Sable and the International Federation of Fly Fishers Great Lakes Council. After studying our letter, General Vadnais told us he understood and shared our concerns and would comply with the letter’s request – a denial of Draft Expansion Zones 2, 3, and 5.

Specifically, our June 9 letter raised the following serious concerns:

- **Map zones 2, 3, and 5 were completely incompatible with military use.** It is impossible to envision how infantry use could harmoniously co-exist with the currently heavy recreational use of these public lands, the highly significant natural features of these lands, the sensitive wetlands and river corridors flowing through these lands, and the enjoyment of private property rights among many private land owners within the boundaries of the proposed expansion zones.
- **Map zones 2, 3, and 5 contained thousands of acres purchased by the public, for the public's recreational use.** In other words, many tracts within the expansion zones were already spoken for – exclusively for recreational use, not military use.

The full text of the June 9 letter of concern is posted on the Anglers of the Au Sable web site. The DNR's maps of Draft Expansion Zones 2, 3, and 5 were posted on our web site in early June. The maps were created by DNR Forestry Division staff and distributed within the DNR in early May. DNR staff initially declined our request to review the maps, but the maps were provided to us by others within the department who were concerned about the Camp Grayling expansion the draft maps envisioned.

Internal DNR emails obtained in May by Anglers of the Au Sable indicated that the military sought to acquire more than 50,000 additional acres in Crawford and Kalkaska counties for expansion of infantry encampments and training. DNR email suggested that the expansion was on a fast track: *"We were advised we need to have potential areas identified by May, with a verbal agreement in place by Mid-July, then details of the agreement can follow."*

Instead, General Vадnais has responded to Anglers and IFFF concerns by assuring any future expansion plan discussions will include input from recreational stakeholders and will not impede on the Manistee and Au Sable river corridors.

"We are extremely pleased to receive General Vадnais response to our June 9 letter," said Anglers of the Au Sable President Bruce Pregler. "The general took seriously – and agrees with – our conclusion that Draft Expansion Zones 2, 3, and 5 are mainly recreational lands, sensitive river corridors, and sensitive wetlands that are simply incompatible with military use. We are very grateful to General Vадnais and other state leaders for their rapid consideration and response. In the end, we firmly believe their decision to decline Draft Expansion Zones 2, 3, and 5 is exactly the right decision for the river corridors our organization is duty-bound to protect."

Anglers of the Au Sable will continue dialogue with both the Department of Natural Resources and the Department of Military Affairs if other Camp Grayling expansion options are considered.

"The DNR Forestry Division gave everyone in the river corridors a pretty serious scare in May with the initial expansion maps," Pregler said. "General Vадnais is now giving us clear assurance that those maps for Zones 2, 3, and 5 are 'off the table.' We now look forward to open and respectful discussions among all parties going forward."