



Michigan Natural Features Inventory

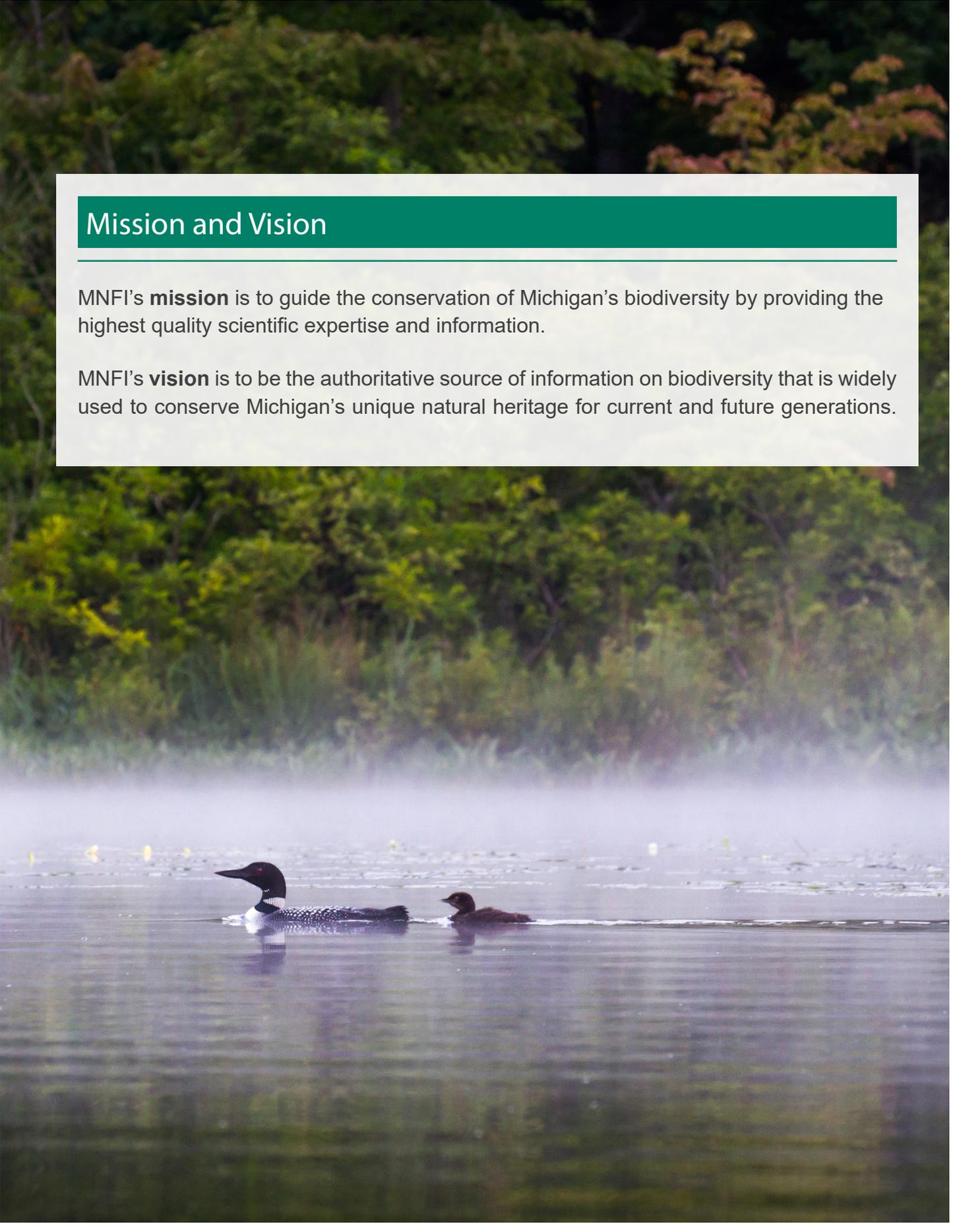
Discover. Define. Deliver.

Strategic Plan 2022-2027

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension

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A photograph of a loon and its chick swimming on a misty lake. The loon is in the foreground, facing left, with its black head and neck and white body with black spots. The chick is smaller and darker, swimming behind it. The water is calm with some lily pads visible. The background is a dense forest of green trees, partially obscured by a light mist or fog.

Mission and Vision

MNFI's **mission** is to guide the conservation of Michigan's biodiversity by providing the highest quality scientific expertise and information.

MNFI's **vision** is to be the authoritative source of information on biodiversity that is widely used to conserve Michigan's unique natural heritage for current and future generations.

Goal 1: Discover

Document the natural history, distribution, status and trends of species and ecosystems.

Michigan has a rich natural heritage encompassing a diversity of ecosystems and species. Our understanding of the natural history, distribution, and condition of these resources is incomplete. It is important to research, document, and quantify what remains to better inform natural resource decisions.

Objective 1.1:

Be the most reliable and comprehensive source of information on the distribution and status of species and ecosystems.

- Strategy 1:** Increase MNFI survey work in aquatic environments and on private properties.
- Strategy 2:** Collaborate with partners to increase the number of participants that collect data.
- Strategy 3:** Communicate regularly with partners to identify and promote high-priority conservation issues.
- Strategy 4:** Hire and train next generation of field scientists.
- Strategy 5:** Document past survey efforts.
- Strategy 6:** Increase data synthesis for information on natural history, distribution, management approaches and conservation status of species and ecosystems.
- Strategy 7:** Solicit input from experts about species and ecosystems.
- Strategy 8:** Develop and populate observational database.
- Strategy 9:** Increase accuracy and efficiency of data we collect.

Objective 1.2:

Evaluate the conservation status of species and ecosystems in decline or lacking information.

- Strategy 1:** Identify natural communities and taxa in need of status assessments.
- Strategy 2:** Prioritize target ecosystems and species for monitoring.
- Strategy 3:** Review and develop monitoring protocols for groups of prioritized species and natural communities.
- Strategy 4:** Increase coordination and development of community-based monitoring.



Objective 1.3

Expand analysis of data collected to better understand distribution, status, and trends of species and ecosystems.

Strategy 1: Work to provide regular funding for core heritage database work.

Strategy 2: Expand the development of models and analysis for species and ecosystems.

Strategy 3: Complete and adapt S ranks for all species and ecosystems.



Goal 2: Define

Identify and research critical issues and emerging threats impacting biodiversity and natural resources.

Michigan's biodiversity is threatened, yet our understanding of the identity and severity of threats to species, ecosystems, and ecological processes is limited. Addressing these knowledge gaps will help our partners better achieve conservation goals statewide.

Objective 2.1

Expand institutional knowledge on high priority and emerging issues impacting biodiversity.

- Strategy 1:** Collaborate with external scientists and organizations to identify information needs, and address conservation issues.
- Strategy 2:** Prioritize issues from internal and external groups that need study.
- Strategy 3:** Communicate priority information to partners and the public.

Objective 2.2:

Strategically participate in conservation initiatives.

- Strategy 1:** Quantify external participation with external groups and known opportunities.
- Strategy 2:** Develop and promote collaborative partnerships.
- Strategy 3:** Communicate back to staff regarding high priority information needs.

Objective 2.3

Maintain a robust conservation research program.

- Strategy 1:** Increase participation in scientific presentations, posters, and peer reviewed articles.
- Strategy 2:** Increase MNFI's profile through coordination and participation in speaker events and conferences.

Strategy 3: Identify and pursue new collaborations with researchers at MSU, other universities, NGOs, and government agencies.

Strategy 4: Develop an internal funding mechanism to support scientific research and project development.

Strategy 5: Explore new and under utilized funding opportunities.



Goal 3: Deliver

Communicate the value of biodiversity and provide the highest quality scientific information and expertise to guide conservation and stewardship.

MNFI maintains the most comprehensive database available on Michigan's rare animals, plants, and natural communities. However, the interpretation and utility of the data are often difficult to convey to end users. MNFI strives to improve the accessibility and increase the usage of its data by synthesizing meaningful products and providing expert services to assist decision-makers and other customers.

Objective 3.1.

Maintain an authoritative natural heritage database.

Strategy 1: Maintain database to NatureServe standards.

Strategy 2: Incorporate data from other sources.

Strategy 3: Prioritize EOs that need to be re-examined.

Objective 3.2.

Make the database more readily available.

Strategy 1: Improve and prioritize data exchange mechanisms with other organizations.

Strategy 2: Increase marketing of database.

Strategy 3: Improve pricing structure to facilitate greater access to core database.

Objective 3.3:

Prioritize, develop, and deliver educational materials and training programs that increase awareness and inform decision making to guide management and conserve biodiversity.

- Strategy 1:** Collaborate with other organizations to develop, promote, and deliver educational materials and training programs.
- Strategy 2:** Develop strategy for evaluating training programs and educational materials.
- Strategy 3:** Develop a mechanism for keeping web products current and continue to develop new content.

Objective 3.4:

Provide scientific expertise and services to guide management and conservation.

- Strategy 1:** Continue to promote our services and build relationships with our partners through participation in formal meetings as well as informal networking.
- Strategy 2:** Promote and expand conservation planning and environmental review services.
- Strategy 3:** Increase profile and enhance access to reports and online tools and services.
- Strategy 4:** Increase output of products beyond our traditional technical reports.





Goal 4: Thrive

Create an effective and enduring organization that fosters a culture of collaboration and learning.

In order to adapt to a continually changing environment, MNFI is committed to functioning as a learning organization that employs staff skilled at creating, acquiring, and transferring knowledge. MNFI will achieve its goals and increase its public profile and support by cultivating a culture of learning, participation, and collaboration.

Objective 4.1:

Foster a culture where all MNFI staff feel valued, supported, and inspired to achieve individual and common goals.

Strategy 1: Staff will increase multicultural awareness and recognize the value of diversity, equity and inclusion.

Strategy 2: Staff will create DEI opportunities within our organization and the conservation field.

Objective 4.2.

Enhance and sustain a culture where staff are supported with the training, development, and resources to achieve professional goals.

Strategy 1: Promote a healthy and participatory workplace culture.

Strategy 2: Recognize and reward significant achievements of the staff.

Objective 4.3.

Maintain alignment across staff and structure to achieve our mission and vision and implement our strategic plan.

Strategy 1: Define staff roles and responsibilities.

- Strategy 2:** Build staff capacity to address emerging issues.
- Strategy 3:** Maintain and expand our expertise through professional development and hiring.
- Strategy 4:** Provide Heritage Leads with adequate institutional support to maintain heritage expertise and database quality.
- Strategy 5:** Develop a network to supply MNFI with quality seasonal employees.

Objective 4.4.

Diversify MNFI's funding model.

- Strategy 1:** Diversify funding.
- Strategy 2:** Increase program development funds.
- Strategy 3:** Engage MSU development personnel to assist with donor development and foundation fundraising.

Objective 4.5.

Increase MNFI's public profile.

- Strategy 1:** Develop a marketing strategy.
- Strategy 2:** Announce completion of major projects/products and approval of major grant awards.
- Strategy 3:** Promote educational events and projects that engage the public.
- Strategy 4:** Develop and distribute the annual report.
- Strategy 5:** Provide support for speaking engagements.

Objective 4.6.

Better serve all the communities of Michigan.

- Strategy 1:** Expand the partners we work with to support and include underserved communities.
- Strategy 2:** Actively seeking diverse perspectives.
- Strategy 3:** Increase awareness of cultural heritage in MNFI standard practices.



Land Acknowledgment

We collectively acknowledge that Michigan State University occupies the ancestral, traditional, and contemporary Lands of the Anishinaabeg – Three Fires Confederacy of Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi peoples. In particular, the University resides on Land ceded in the 1819 Treaty of Saginaw. We recognize, support, and advocate for the sovereignty of Michigan’s twelve federally-recognized Indian nations, for historic Indigenous communities in Michigan, for Indigenous individuals and communities who live here now, and for those who were forcibly removed from their Homelands. By offering this Land Acknowledgement, we affirm Indigenous sovereignty and will work to hold Michigan State University more accountable to the needs of American Indian and Indigenous peoples.



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