



With Safety and Conservation in Mind, Michigan Morel Lovers Can Enjoy the Hunt

As hungry morel enthusiasts head to the woods this spring in search of their favorite fungi, the Department of Natural Resources and Environment ask that they keep conservation and safety in mind.

“It’s important for morel hunters to practice conservation-friendly harvesting techniques,” said DNRE Forest Management Division Chief Lynne Boyd. “Proper collection encourages the growth of a new mushroom crop the following year.”

Boyd said that when harvesting mushrooms, hunters should pinch them off at the stem, slightly above the soil. This technique minimizes the amount of dirt on the mushroom and encourages re-growth. She said to avoid raking the forest floor, because raking has a negative impact on the ecology of the forest and overharvests the mushrooms.

Some of DNRE activities also promote a healthy yield of morels. “In forests where we have had a prescribed burn, we typically see a larger crop of morels the following year,” said Boyd. The DNRE publishes a list of prescribed burn and wildfire areas as a service to morel hunters.

In addition, mushroom hunters must be certain they can identify what they are picking. Some false morels are poisonous and can cause people to get sick, sometimes fatally. The Michigan State University Extension has identified at least 50 types of poisonous mushrooms that grow in Michigan.

“Please be certain you are familiar with mushroom species before picking and eating wild mushrooms,” said Boyd. “If you’re not certain a mushroom is safe to eat, don’t pick it.”

Those who wish to search for mushrooms on state land do not need a permit. Mushroom hunters who use off-road vehicles to get into state forest lands are reminded that ORV use in the Lower Peninsula is restricted to designated and signed trails, routes and use areas.

Persons who use state forest lands for camping are reminded they must fill out and post a free camp registration card, available at most DNRE offices.

To find maps with suitable ORV trails, public lands available for mushroom picking and types of vegetation, check out the new innovative application Mi-HUNT. To access the application, learn more about poisonous mushroom species and find a list of wildfire locations, visit www.michigan.gov/mushroomhunting.